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CHIEF BRITISH POETS OF THE FOURTEENTH AND FIFTEENTH CENTURIES

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THE CHIEF BRITISH POETS OF THE FOURTEENTH AND FIFTEENTH CENTURIES. Edited with explanatory and biographical notes by William Allan Neilson, Ph.D., President of Smith College, and K. G. T. Webster, Assistant Professor of English, Harvard University.

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CHIEF BRITISH POETS
OF THE FOURTEENTH AND FIFTEENTH CENTURIES

Selected Poems

EDITED WITH EXPLANATORY
AND BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES
BY
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Professor of English
AND
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Assistant Professor of English
Harvard University

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PREFACE

THE aim in the present volume, as in the other issues of the series, has been, not to compile a mediæval anthology of choice poems and passages, but to represent fully and where possible by complete works, all the chief poets of the period covered. The selections have been made and the apparatus furnished with a view to arousing the interest and satisfying the curiosity of the general reader and the student of literature rather than of language. Care has indeed been taken to provide trustworthy texts, and the book should not be without value to those seeking to extend their knowledge of Middle English and Middle Scots; but the glosses supplied in the footnotes are full enough to make possible the enjoyment of the poems by readers without special acquaintance with the earlier stages of the language. In the case of some of the more difficult of the alliterative poems, *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, *The Pearl*, and *Piers Plowman*, the amount of glossary required was so great that it seemed that our purpose would be better served by a literal translation than by footnotes so numerous as to make continuous reading all but impossible. Precisely how faithful these renderings are, the reader can judge for himself by comparing the translations with the specimens of the originals printed at the beginning of the two first-named poems.

No apology need be made for including a generous selection from the traditional ballads. Their authors, if they had authors in the strict sense, are indeed not among the "Chief Poets," nor are they all by any means to be assigned to the two centuries with which we are here concerned; but in a series which, it is hoped, will cover the whole field of English poetry, it would be preposterous to neglect a type which is one of its glories; and, in point of chronology, the ballads fit this volume as well as any. They belong to the folk, and the taste of the folk has little relation to the conventional periods into which literary history is divided.

A notable feature of the collection is the prominence given to the Scottish poets of the period. Partly on account of the political separation of England and Scotland, partly through an exaggerated sense of the difficulty of the dialect, students of English literature have unduly neglected these writers. Yet after a few peculiarities in spelling have been noted, Barbour, for example, is as easy as Chaucer; and in the matter of poetic quality none of Chaucer's English disciples is the equal of Henryson or Dunbar. The latter, it is true, is often mentioned if seldom read; but it is doubtful whether there is in the whole of English literature a case of neglected genius so remarkable as that of Henryson. This book will justify itself if it does no more than make accessible and call attention to poetry of so much interest and distinction.

In the choice of poets and poems to be included we have been greatly aided by many of our colleagues in the universities of the United States, — so many that only a general acknowledgment can be made of the obligations under which their generosity has placed us. For the final decisions, as well as for whatever faults in judgment and scholarship the book may contain, the editors are jointly responsible. Mr. Webster translated the *Gawain* and the *Pearl*, Mr. Neilson *Piers Plowman*, but each has had the opportunity to revise and criticize, so that the credit or discredit must be shared in common.

W. A. N.
K. G. T. W.

CAMBRIDGE, 1916.

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CHIEF BRITISH POETS OF THE FOURTEENTH AND FIFTEENTH CENTURIES

ROBERT MANNING OF BRUNNE

WITCHCRAFT AND DREAMS

(*Handling Sin*, ll. 339–556)

Gyf thou ever thurgh folye
Dydyst ought[1] do nygromauncy,
Or to the devyl dedyst sacryfyse
Thurgh wychcraftys asyse,[2]
Or any man gaf the mede[3]
For to reyse the devyl[4] yn dede,
For to telle, or for to wrey[5]
Thyng that the was don awey;
Gyf thou have do any of thys,
Thou hast synned and do a-mys,
And thou art wurthy to be shent[6]
Thurgh thys yche[7] commaundëment.
Gyf thou yn swerd, other yn bacyn,
Any chylde madyst loke theryn,
Or yn thumbe,[8] or yn cristal, —
Wycchëcraft men clepyn[9] hyt al.
Beleve nought yn the pyys[10] cheteryng;
Hyt ys no trouthe, but fals belevyng.
Many belevyn yn the pye:
Whan she comyth lowe or hye
Cheteryng, and hath no reste,
Than sey they we shul have geste.[11]
Manyon[12] trowyn[13] on here wylys,
And many tymes the pye hem gylys.[14]
Also ys metyng on the morwe
When thou shalt go to bye or to borwe;
Gyf than thy erende spede ne sette,
Than wylt thou curse hym that thou mette.
Hyt ys the tycement of the devyl
To curse hem that thoght the no evyl.
Of hancel[15] y can no skylle[16] also;
Hyt ys nought to beleve tharto:
Me thynketh hyt ys fals every deyl,
Y beleve hyt nought, ne never shal weyl.[17]
For many havyn glad hancel at the morw,
And to hem or evyn comth mochyl sorw;
And manyon havyn yn the day grete noy,[18]
And yyt or evyn cometh to hem mochyl ioye.

[1] at all. [2] mode. [3] hire. [4] Call him up — the origin of our colloquial phrase. [5] hide. [6] punished. [7] very. [8] One divined by the white flecks on the thumb-nail. [9] call. [10] magpie's. [11] doings — or possibly, a guest. [12] Many a one. [13] believe. [14] deceives. [15] prognostication. [16] I know no good of it. [17] well. [18] annoyance.

So mayst thou wyte, gyf thou gode can,[19]
That hancel ys no beleve to man.
Belevë nought moche yn no dremys,
For many be nat but gleteryng glemys.
These clerkys seyn that hyt ys vanyte,
That nought ys, ne never shal be;
And ofte mayst thou fynde hyt ryght
That thou hast mete[20] upon the nyght.
But therof to have mochyl affyaunce
The may betyde the sunner a chaunce.
On syxë maners may a man mete:
Sum beyn to beleve, sum beyn to lete.[21]
Sum men dremyn for surfeture,
That etyn or drynkyn over mesure;
And sum dremë on veyn thyng
For over mychyl and grete fastyng;
And sum beyn the fendes temptacyoun
That to the trowthe ys fals tresoun;
And sum come of over mochyl thought
Of thyng that men wuld havë wrought;
And sum beyn Goddys pryvyte
That he shewyth to warnë the;
And, sum come thurgh grete stody,
And shewë to the apertly.[22]
These syxë maners a clerk us tellyth,
Seynt Gregory, that mochyl spellyth.[23]
The fyrst twey[24] maners, we wote weyl,
Beyn oure defautë every deyl.
The ton[25] ys for over mychel outrage,
The touther ys febylnesse of corage,[26]
As yn mete, or drynk, over moche takyng,
Or yn feblyng the body with moche fastyng.
The touther fourë thys clerkys wytyn,
For yn the byble they ben wrytyn.
Gyf they ne come thurgh temptacyun
Of the fende, that ys a felun,
Nevere had seyd Salamon
'That dremys men deseyve[27] manyon.'
For tho that to dremys over moche trastys,[28]
To scornë hem the fende then frastys.[29]
Gyf they come nat also thurgh thoght,
The wysë clerk hadde tolde hyt noght,
Ne suffryd hyt be wrytyn yn boke
That men alle day rede yn, and loke,

[19] understand. [20] dreamt. [21] neglect. [22] openly. [23] relates. [24] two. [25] The one. [26] spirit. [27] deceive. [28] trust. [29] tries.

Thus the wyse clerk seyth, Catun,
And techyth chyldryn thys lessun,
'Geve no charge to (thy) dremys,
They been but as (glasyng) glemys
That yn the thought (stertys &) lepys
A-nyght whan thou (restys &) slepys:
That you wakyng (sumtyme) thenkes,
Beforë thy ygen hyt blenkys.'[1]
Gyf they ne come thurgh pryvyte
That God wyl shewë me or the,
Iosep of dremys had gyve no kepe[2]
What hym was shewed yn hys slepe,
That fadyr and modyr and al hys kynde,
Thurgh hym shuld they wurshyp fynde.
Yn the byble men redë thys
In the fyrst boke of Genesys.
Also hyt was shewyd pryvyly
To Iosep that wedded oure lady,
That with the chyld they shuldë fle
To Egypt, that yche cuntre.
Thys ys clepyd revelacyun,
To shewe byfore what ys to doun.
Gyf they com noght thurgh stodyyng,
That tokene ys of selkouthe[3] thyng,
Danyel had noght wyst byfore
The dreme of Nabugodonosore.
Danyel seyd un-to the kyng,
"Thou thougtyst to nyght a selkouthe thyng;
What manere folk shuld they be
That yn this worlde come aftyr the,
And how they shulde the wurlde governe;
Yn thy thoght thou gunne hyt gerne;[4]
And God shewyd hyt yn thy sygt;
That dremed the the touther nyght."
He tolde the profyte than every deyl;
And the profete redde[5] hyt weyl:
Wysly he seyd, and weyl thurgh soght,
Whan he hede[6] toke to that the kynge thoght.
And God shewyd what shuld betyde;
What manere folk shulde aftyr a-byde.
Sethyn ther beyn dremys so many manere,[7]
Than ys doute and gretë were[8]
To wytë where-of dremys come,
That every nyght dremyn thurgh custo-me;
Ther beyn so many dremys yn veyne,
That no man wotë no certeyn
But they that beyn with God pryve,
To whom ys graunted, swych thyng to see:
Swych men deseyveth nat the devyl,
They have no grace to knowe hys evyl;
Ellys may no man fynde hem stable,
So ben dremys deseyvable.
Gyf thou telle hem, than mayst thou erre;
And gyf thow trow hem, that ys wel werre;[9]
For thou mayst dreme of sume evyl thyng
That may turn to better for thy preyyng.
"Thou, leudman,[10] gyf godë tent,[11]
Trow noght agen the comaundment."
Gyf thou beleve yn wycchëcraft
To chaungë thyng be the devylys craft, —
Swych beyn the devyl betaght,[12]
With holy chyrche they ben unsaght,[13]
And allë tho that on hem trowe
Mow drede hem self to brenne yn lowe;[14]
And thogh they fynde hyt sothe other whyle,[15]
Hyt ys thurgh the fendës gyle.
The fend fondyth[16] with alle hys myght
To put sumwat yn herë syght
That shal make hem swych thyng beleve
And God almyghty myspay[17] and greve.
For ther was never womman ne man
That any wycchëcraft be-gan,
That ever myght bryng hyt to an ende,
But fals beleve that wyl hem shende.
The wurdys certys beyn ryght noght,
But fals beleve maketh dede y-wroght.
For whan thou trowyst yn a fals thyng
The devyl hyt shewyth for that trowyng.
Lo here a tale of a wycche,
That leved[18] no better tha(n) a bycche.

[1] flashes before thine eyes. [2] heed. [3] strange. [4] began to yearn for it. [5] expounded. [6] heed. [7] kinds. [8] uncertainty.

THE TALE OF THE WITCH AND HER COW-SUCKING BAG

There was a wycche, and made a bagge,
A bely[19] of lethyr, a gretë swagge,[20]
She sygaldryd[21] so thys bagge bely
That hyt gede[22] and soke[23] mennys ky,[24]
At evene, and at morw tyde,
Yn here pasture, other ellys be syde.
Long hyt gede aboutë fast,
Tyl hyt was parceyved at the last;
Than all the godemen of the toune,
Byfore the bysshop dyden here somoune;
They dyden the baggë with here bere,
To wetë[25] what she shuld answere.
Hyt was shewyd byfore the bysshop,
That she dyde[26] to goo swych a melk slop,[27]

[9] worse. [10] layman. [11] heed. [12] handed over to. [13] unreconciled. [14] burn in flame. [15] sometimes. [16] strives. [17] displease. [18] believed. [19] bellows. [20] bulky object. [21] enchanted. [22] went. [23] sucked. [24] kine. [25] know. [26] caused. [27] bag.

Thurgh wycchecraft and mysaventure,
To sugke here keyn yn here pasture.
The bysshop merveyled, and other mo,[1]
How that she myght do hyt go.
"Dame," seyd the bysshop, "do thy quentyse,[2]
And late us se how hyt shal ryse."
Thys wycche here charme began to sey,
The slop ros up, and gede the weye.
The bysshop seyd, "thys have we seyn;
Do hyt now to lygge[3] ageyn,"
The wycchë dede al at hys wylle:
She made the slop agen lygge stylle.
The bysshop made a clerk than wryte
Al that she seyd, mochel and lyte,
And allë how she made here went;[4]
The bysshop tharto gaf gode entent.
"Than," seyde the bysshop, "now shal y,
As thou hast do, do thy maystry."[5]
The bysshop began the charme to rede,
And as she dyde, he dyde yn dede;
He seyd and dedë every deyl,
Ryght as she dede, he dede as weyl.
The sloppe lay stylle, as hyt ded were,
For hym ne ros hyt never the more.
"Why," seyd he, "wyl hyt nat ryse,
And y have do the samë wyse,
And seyd the wurdys, lesse ne mo,
And for my seyyng wyl hyt nat go?"
"Nay," she seyd, "why shuld hyt so?
Ye beleve nat as y do:
Wulde ye beleve my wurdys as y,
Hyt shulde a go, and sokun ky."
He seyd, "than faleth[6] noght but belevyng";
She seyd, "that helpeth al my thyng;
And so hyt ys for ourë lawe,
Beleve ys morë than the sawe;[7]
For thou mayst sey what thou wylt,
But thou beleve hyt, ellys ys alle spylt;
Alle that y seyd, ye beleve hyt weyl,
My beleve hath do the dede every deyl."
The bysshop comaundyd that she shuld noght
Beleve ne wurche as she had wroght.

THE TALE OF THE SACRILEGIOUS CAROLLERS

(*Handling Sin*, ll. 8987–9252)

KAROLLES,[8] wrastlynges, or somour games,
Who-so ever haunteth any swyche shames
Yn cherche, other yn cherchëyerd,
Of sacrylage he may be a-ferd;
Or entyrludës, or syngynge,
Or tabure bete,[9] or other pypynge,
Alle swychë thyng forbodyn es
Whyle the prest stondeth at messe.
Alle swyche, to every gode preste ys lothe,
And sunner wyl he make hym wroth
Than he wyl that hath no wyt,
Ne undyrstondeth nat holy wryt;
And specyaly, at hyghe tymes,
Karolles to synge, and redë rymys,
Noght yn nonë holy stedes,[10]
That myght dysturble the prestës bedes,
Or gyf he were yn orysun
Or any outher devocyun,
Sacrylage ys alle hyt tolde,[11]
Thys and many other folde.
But for to leve yn cherche to daunce,
Y shal ghow telle a ful grete chaunce,
And y trow, the most that fel
Ys as soth as the gospel;
And fyl thys chauncë yn thys londe,
Yn Ingland, as y undyrstonde;
Yn a kynges tyme that hyght Edward,
Fyl thys chaunce that was so hard.
Hyt was upp-on a crystemesse nyght
That twelve folys[12] a karolle dyght;[13]
Yn wodehed,[14] as hyt were yn cuntek[15]
They come to a tounne men calles Colbek;
The cherche of the tounne that they to come,
Ys of Seynt Magne[16] that suffred martyrdome;
Of Sent Bukcestre hyt ys also,
Seynt Magnes suster, that they come to.
Here names of alle, thus fonde y wryte,
And as y wote, now shul ye wyte:
Here lodës-man[17] that made hem glew,[18]
Thus ys wryte, he hyghte Gerlew;
Twey maydens were yn here coveyne,[19]
Mayden Merswynde, and Wybessyne;
Alle these come thedyr for that enchesone[20]
Of the prestës doghtyr of the tounne.
The prest hyght Robert, as y kan ame;[21]
Agone hyght hys sone by name;
Hys doghter, that these men wulde have,
Thus ys wryte, that she hyght Ave;
Echoune consented to o wyl,
Who shuld go Ave oute to tyl:[22]
They graunted echone out to sende
Bothe Wybessynë and Merswynde.
These wommen gede and tolled[23] here oute

[1] others besides. [2] cunning. [3] lie down. [4] trick. [5] feat. [6] needeth. [7] saying. [8] Circular dances, and the accompanying song. [9] beating. [10] places. [11] accounted. [12] fools. [13] made. [14] madness. [15] contumely. [16] Magnus. [17] leader. [18] music. [19] company. [20] on account. [21] guess. [22] entice. [23] enticed.

Wyth hem to karolle the cherche aboute.
Beune ordeyned here karollyng;
Gerlew endyted what they shuld syng:
Thys ys the karolle that they sunge,
As telleth the latyn tunge,
"Equitabat Bevo per silvam frondosam,
Ducebat secum Merswyndam formosam.
Quid stamus, cur non imus?"
(. . . *a gap in the MS.*)
"By the leved wode rode Bevolyne,
Wyth hym he leddë feyre Merswyne.
Why stondë we? why go we noght?"
Thys ys the karolle that Grysly wroght.
Thys songe sunge they yn the cherche-yerd, —
Of foly were they no thyng aferd, —
Un-to the matynes were alle done,
And the messe shuld bygynnë sone.
The preste hym revest[1] to begynne messe,
And they ne left therefore, never the lesse,
But daunsed furthe as they bygan;
For alle the messë they ne blan.[2]
The preste, that stode at the autere[3]
And herde here noysë and here bere,[4]
Fro the auter down he nam,[5]
And to the cherchë porche he cam,
And seyd, "On Goddes behalve, y yow forbede
That ye no lenger do swych dede;
But cometh yn, on feyre manere,
Goddës servysë for to here,
And doth at Crystyn mennys lawe;
Karolleth no more for Crystys awe,
Wurschyppeth hym with alle youre myght,
That of the Vyrgyne was bore thys nyght."
For alle hys byddyng, lefte they noght,
But daunsed furth, as they thoght.
The prest tharefore was sore a-greved;
He preyd God that he on belevyd,
And for Seynt Magne, that he wulde so werche —
Yn whos wurschyp sette was the cherche —
That swych a veniaunce[6] were on hem sent
Are they oute of that stede were went,
That they myght ever ryght so wende
Unto that tymë twelvemonth ende:
(Yn the latyne that y fonde thore,
He seyth nat 'twelvemouth,' but 'evermore.')
He cursed hem there alsaume[7]
As they karoled on here gaume.
As sone as the preste hadde so spoke,
Every hande yn outher so fast was loke,
That no man myght with no wundyr
That twelvemonthe parte hem asundyr.
The preste gede yn, whan thys was done,
And commaunded hys sone Agone
That he shulde go swythe[8] aftyr Ave,
Oute of that karolle algate[9] to have.
But al to late that wurde was seyd,
For on hem alle was the veniaunce leyd.
Agone wende weyl for to spede;
Un-to the karolle asswythe[10] he gede;
Hys systyr by the arme he hente,[11]
And the arme fro the body wente.
Men wundred allë, that there wore,
And merveyle mowe ye herë more;
For sethen[12] he had the arme yn hande,
The body gede furth karoland;
And nother body ne the arme
Bledde never blodë, colde ne warme,
But was as drye, with al the haunche,
As of a stok were ryve a braunche.
Agone to hys fadyr went,
And broght hym a sory present:
"Loke, fadyr," he seyd, "and have hyt here,
The armë of thy doghtyr dere
That was myn ownë syster Ave,
That y wende y myght a save.[13]
Thy cursyng, now sene hyt ys
With veniaunce on thyn ownë flessh;
Fellyche[14] thou cursedst, and over sone;
Thou askedest veniaunce, thou hast thy bone."[15]
Yow thar[16] nat aske gyf there was wo
With the preste and with many mo.
The prest that cursed for that daunce,
On some of hys fyl hardë chaunce.
He toke hys doghtyr arme forlorn
And byryëd hyt on the morn;
The nextë day the arme of Ave
He fonde hyt lyggyng above the grave.
He byryed hyt on anouther day,
And eft[17] above the grave hyt lay;
The thryddë tyme he byryed hyt,
And eft was hyt kast oute of the pyt.
The prest wulde byrye hyt no more;
He dredde the veniaunce ferly[18] sore;
Yn-to the cherche he bare the arme;
For drede and doute of morë harme,
He ordeyned hyt for to be,
That every man myght with ye hyt se.
These men that gede so karolland
Alle that yerë hand yn hand,

[1] attired. [2] ceased. [3] altar. [4] cries. [5] took his way. [6] vengeance. [7] all together. [8] straightway. [9] by all means. [10] forthwith. [11] took. [12] after. [13] have saved. [14] Savagely. [15] boon. [16] you need. [17] again. [18] wondrous.

They never oute of that stede gede,
Ne nonë myght hem thennë [1] lede;
There the cursyng fyrst bygan,
Yn that place a-boute they ran,
That never ne felte they no werynes —
As many bodyes, for goyng, dos —
Ne metë etë, ne drank drynke,
Ne sleptë onely a-lepy [2] wynke;
Nyght, ne day, they wyst of none,
Whan hyt was come, whan hyt was gone;
Frost ne snogh, hayle ne reyne,
Of colde ne hete, felte they no peyne;
Heere ne naylës never grewe,
Ne solowed [3] clothes, ne turned hewe;
Thundyr ne lyghtnyng dyd hem no dere,[4]
Goddes mercy dyd hyt fro hem were; [5]
But sungge that songge that the wo wroght,
"Why stondë we? why go we noght?"
What man shuld thyr be yn thys lyve,
That ne wulde hyt see, and thedyr dryve? [6]
The Emperoure Henry come fro Rome
For to see thys hard(ë) dome;
Whan he hem say, he weptë sore
For the myschefe that he sagh thore;
He did come wryghtës for to make
Coveryng over hem for tempest sake;
But that they wroght, hyt was yn veyn,
For hyt come to no certeyn;
For that they settë on oo [7] day,
On the touther downe hyt lay;
Ones, twyys, thryys, thus they wrogt,
And alle here makyng was for nogt;
Myght no coveryng hyle [8] hem fro colde
Tyl tyme of mercy, that Cryst hyt wolde.
Tyme of grace fyl thurgh hys mygt
At the twelvemonth end, on the yolë [9] nyght,
The same oure that the prest hem banned,[10]
They samë oure, atwynne they woned;[11]
That houre that he cursed hem ynne,
That samë oure they gede atwynne:
And, as yn twynkelyng of an ye,
Yn-to the cherchë gun they flye,
And on the pavement they fyl alle downe,
As they hade be dede, or fal yn a swone.
Thre days, styl, they lay echone,
That none steryd, other flesshe or bone,
And, at the thre days ende,
To lyfe God grauntede hem to wende.
They sette hem upp, and spak apert

[1] thence. [2] a single. [3] faded. [4] caused them no harm. [5] turn aside. [6] go. [7] one. [8] cover, protect. [9] Yule. [10] cursed. [11] apart they went.

To the parysshe prest, syre Robert:
"Thou art ensample and enchesun [12]
Of oure long confusyun;
Thou maker art of oure travayle,
That ys to many grete mervayle;
And thy traveyle shalt thou sone ende,
For to thy long home, sone shalt thou wende."
Alle they ryse that ychë tyde,
But Avë; she lay dede besyde;
Grete sorowe had here fadyr, here brother;
Merveyle and drede had allë outher,
Y trow no drede of soulë dede,[13]
But with pyne was broght the body dede.
The fyrst man was the fadyr, the prest,
That deyd aftyr the doghtyr nest.[14]
Thys ychë [15] arme that was of Ave,
That nonë myght leye yn grave,
The emperoure dyd a vessel werche
To do hyt yn, and hange yn the cherche,
That alle men myght se hyt and knawe,
And thenk on the chaunce when men hyt sawe.
These men that hadde go thus karolland
Alle the yere, fast hand yn hand,
Thogh that they werë than asunder,
Yyt alle the world spake of hem wunder:
That same hoppyng that they fyrst gede,
That daunce gede they thurgh land and lede; [16]
And as they ne myght fyrst be unbounde,
So efte to-gedyr myght they never be founde,
Ne myght they never come ageyn
To-gedyr, to oo stede [17] certeyn.
Foure gede to the courte of Rome,
And ever hoppyng aboute they nome; [18]
With sundyr lepys come they thedyr,
But they come never efte to-gedyr;
Here clothes ne roted, ne naylës grewe
Ne heere ne wax, ne solowed hewe,
Ne never hadde they amendëment,
That we herde, at any corseynt,[19]
But at the vyrgyne Seynt Edyght,[20]
There was he botened,[21] seynt Teodryght;
On oure lady day, yn lenten tyde,
As he slepte here toumbe besyde,
There he hade hys medycyne,
At seynt Edyght, the holy vyrgyne.

[12] occasion. [13] no fear of her soul's being dead. [14] next. [15] same. [16] nations. [17] one place. [18] went. [19] holy saint. [20] Edith. [21] amended.

THE PEARL[1]

1

PERLE plesaunte[2] to prynces paye,
To clanly clos in golde so clere!
Oute of oryent, I hardyly saye,
Ne proued I neuer her precios pere,
So rounde, so reken in vche araye,
So smal, so smoþe her sydeȝ were.
Quere-so-euer I jugged gemmeȝ gaye,
I sette hyr sengeley *in* synglure.
Allas! I leste hyr *in* on erbere;
Þurȝ gresse to grounde hit fro me yot.
I dewyne, for-dolked of luf-daungere,
Of þat pryuy perle *wyth*-outen spot.

2

Syþen *in* þat spote[3] hit fro me sprange,
Ofte haf I wayted, wyschande þat wele
Þat wont watȝ whyle deuoyde my wrange,
& heuen my happe & al my hele,
Þat dotȝ bot þrych my hert[4] þrange,
My breste in bale bot bolne & bele.
ȝet þoȝt me neuer so swete a sange
As stylle stounde let to me stele;
For-soþe *per* fleten to me fele.
To þenke hir color so clad *in* clot!
O moul, þou marreȝ a myry iuele,
My priuy perle *wyth*-outen spotte!

3

Þat spot of spyseȝ [mo]t[5] nedeȝ sprede,
Þer such rycheȝ to rot is runne;
Blomeȝ blayke & blwe[6] & rede
Þer schyneȝ ful schyr agayn þe sunne;
Flor & fryte may not be fede
Þer hit doun drof *in* moldeȝ dunne;
For vch gresse mot grow of grayneȝ dede,
No whete were elleȝ to woneȝ wonne;
Of goud vche goude is ay by-gonne;
So semly a sede moȝt fayly not,
Þat spry[n]gande spyceȝ vp ne sponne
Of þat *precios* perle wyth-outen spotte.

4

To þat spot þat I in speche expoun
I entred, in þat erber grene,
In augoste in a hyȝ seysoun,
Quen corne is coruen wyth crokeȝ kene.
On huyle þer perle hit trendeled doun
Schadowed þis worteȝ ful schyre & schene—
Gilofre, gyngure, & gromylyoun,
& pyonys powdered ay by-twene.
ȝif hit watȝ semly on to sene,
A fayr reflayr ȝet fro hit flot,
Þer wonys þat worþyly, I wot & wene,
My *precious* perle wyth-outen spot.

5

Bifore þat spot my honde I spenn[e]d
For care ful colde þat to me caȝt;
A de[r]uely dele in my hert denned,
Þaȝ resoun sette myseluen saȝt.
I playned my perle *þat per* watȝ spenned
Wyth fyrte skylleȝ þat faste faȝt;
Þaȝ kynde of kryst me comfort kenned,
My wreched wylle *in* wo ay wraȝte.
I felle upon þat flo*u*ry flaȝt,
Suche odo*u*r to my herneȝ schot;
I slode vpon a slepy*n*g-slaȝte,
On þat prec[i]os perle *wyth*outen spot.

6

Fro spot my spyryt þer sprang *in* space,
My body on balke þer bod *in* sweuen;
My goste is gon in godeȝ grace,
In auenture *þer* meruayleȝ meuen.
I ne wyste in þis worlde quere *þat* hit wace,
Bot I knew me keste *þer* klyfeȝ cleuen;
Towarde a foreste I bere þe face,
Where rych rokkeȝ wer to dyscreuen.
Þe lyȝt of hem myȝt no mon leuen,
Þe glemande glory þat of hem gle*n*t;
For wern neu*er* webbeȝ þat wyȝeȝ weuen
Of half so dere adub[be]mente.

[1] See the notes to *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, the excerpt from the original text, for the main peculiarities of the manuscript.

[2] The italic letters, like *n* here, are indicated in the MS. only by a sign of contraction.

[3] Each stanza in the sets of five is connected to the preceding stanza by the repetition in the first line of some word from the last line of the preceding stanza.

[4] Such a word could perfectly well have its original final *e* in order to improve the metre.

[5] Brackets about letters, as here, indicate that the letters have been supplied or emended by an editor.

[6] *w* for single *u*.

THE PEARL

I

1. Pearl, pleasant for princes to set cleanly in clear gold, hardily I say that out of the Orient I never found its[1] precious peer. So round, so beauteous in each array, so small, so smooth were its sides, that wheresoever I judged of gay jewels I set it singly by itself. Alas! I lost it in an arbor;[2] through grass to ground it went from me. I pine, stricken[3] by love-danger, for mine own pearl without a spot.

2. Since in that spot it sprang from me, oft have I waited, wishing for that weal that was wont whilom to rid me of my woe and raise my hap and all my joy; it doth pierce[4] through my heart and makes my breast in bale to swell and burn. Yet me thought never was there so sweet a song as stole to me in the silent hour; forsooth there floated to me many, to think of her beauty, so clad in clay. O earth, thou marrest a lovely jewel, mine own pearl without a spot!

3. That spot must needs abound in spices where such riches is run to rot. Blooms yellow and blue and red shine there full sheer against the sun; flower and fruit may not fade[5] where it drove down in the dun mould; for every herb must grow from a seed's death; else were no wheat e'er brought to barns; from good each good is aye begun. So seemly a seed could not fail that springing spices should not start up from that precious pearl without a spot.

4. To the spot which I tell of, in that green garden, I went in August, at the height of the season,[6] when corn is cut with sickles keen. On the mound where the pearl had rolled down, these herbs so bright and fair cast their shade[7] — gilly-flower, ginger and gromwell, and ever peonies sprinkled between. If it was seemly to look upon, yet more pleasing was the sweet odour that floated from it. There dwells, I wot and ween, that worthy one, my precious pearl without a spot.

5. Before that spot I clasped my hands for the heavy sorrow which seized me. A doleful[8] pang made a tumult in my heart, although reason reconciled me. I lamented my pearl that was enclosed there with frightened[9] reasonings that fast fought. Though Christ's goodness offered me comfort, my wretched will sank ever into grief. Such a fragrance shot to my senses that I fell upon the flowery sward, and dropped into a sleeping trance above that precious pearl without a spot.

II

6. From the spot my spirit sprang into space; my body abode in a trance on the mound. My ghost by God's grace went on an adventure to a land where marvels move; I knew not where in this world it was; but I knew that I was borne where cliffs are cloven; my face I turned toward a forest where rich rocks were to be descried; the light of them might no man believe, the gleaming glory that glinted from them; for never were fabrics woven by men of half so fair adornment.

7. Adorned were all the sides of the downs with crystal cliffs so clear. Bright woods about them were, with boles as blue as indigo; like burnished silver the leaves unfold, trembling thick on every limb; when a gleam from the sky glides against them with a splendid shimmering they shine full bright. The gravel upon the ground[10] was precious pearls of Orient, — the sunbeams but dark and dull in comparison with that ornament.

8. The adornment of those beauteous

[1] The pearl, as may be seen by a glance at the original on the opposite page, is indifferently neuter and feminine in the poem.

[2] Perhaps *garden*, i.e. Anglo-French *herber*, grassy place, herb garden.

[3] Reading *fordolled* instead of *fordolked*, which latter might mean pierced.

[4] Or "pierce my heart frequently."

[5] MS. *fede* is doubtful.

[6] Or, "on a high festival," i.e. Assumption.

[7] Ambiguous passage: possibly the flowers shaded the hill; or again, the hill the flowers.

[8] Keeping the MS. reading, *deuely*, as if from Old French *doel*, *duel*, grief.

[9] Doubtful. The MS. *fyrte* may be — as it is translated — related to A.S. *fyrhtan*, to frighten; or may possibly stand for the numeral *forty*.

[10] Literally: The gravel that on the ground gan grind.

downs made my spirit all grief forget; so fresh was the savour of the fruit that it fairly restored me like food. Fowls there flew in the forest, of flaming hues, both small and great. But the citole-string and the cithern player could not recount their splendid mirth; for when those birds beat their wings, they sang with sweet assent; so gracious glee could no man get as to hear and see their adornment.

9. So was adorned in dear array all that woodland where fortune leads me forth; the beauty thereof for to relate is no man worthy. I walked aye forth in happy wise; no bank so big as to cause me fear; the farther into the park, the fairer gan rise the plain, the plants, the spice, the trees,[1] and hedges and banks, and rich meads — their steep banks like gold embroidery fine. I won to a water that ran bright by the shore. Lord, fair was its adornment!

10. The adornment of the precious dell was radiant banks of beryl bright; sweetly sounding swept the water, with a murmuring voice rushing by. In the bottom there stood bright stones, that glowed and glimmered like rays through glass, or as the streaming[2] stars, when men sleep sound,[3] stare in the welkin in winter night; for each pebble, set there in the pool, was emerald, or sapphire, or gentle gem; so that all the pool gleamed with the light, so rich was its adornment.

III

11. The adornment dear of down and dales, of wood and water and fair plains, raised bliss in me, abated my sorrows, ended my distress, destroyed my pains. Down along a stream that swiftly runs I turned in bliss. Crowded was my mind.[4] The further I followed these watery vales the greater strength of joy strained my heart. As Fortune fares whereas she will, whether solace she send or sorrow, the wight to whom her will she grants[5] strives to have aye more and more.

12. More of weal was in that plan[6] than I could tell, though I had time; for earthly heart might not suffice to the tenth part of that gladness glad. Therefore I thought that Paradise was there over against the broad banks. I supposed the stream to be a division by waters made between joys.[7] Beyond the brook, by slope or dale, I imagined that city[8] might be placed. But the water was deep, I durst not wade; and ever I longed aye more and more.

13. More and more, and yet still more I listed to see beyond the brook; for if it was fair where I walked, much lovelier was the farther land. About me gan I to stumble and stare; to find a ford fast gan I seek; but dangers more I wis there were the farther I stalked by the strand; and ever it seemed to me I should not to flinch for woe where joys so precious were. Then a new matter came to hand that moved my mind aye more and more.

14. A greater marvel gan my mind to daunt. I saw beyond that merry mere a crystal cliff right brilliant; many a royal ray shot from it. At the foot thereof there sat a child, a maiden of mien full debonaire; gleaming white was her garment — I knew her well, I had seen her before. As glistening gold when it is cut, so shone that fair one upon the shore.[9] I looked upon her there at length; and the longer, I knew her more and more.

15. The more I searched her fair face, her beauteous figure scanned, such a gladdening glory glided to me as heretofore was little wont. Desire urged me to call her, but confusion gave my heart a blow; I saw her in so strange a place; such a shock might well amaze my heart. Then she lifted up her fair face, her visage white as plain ivory, that stung my strayed heart; and more and more the longer she gazed.

IV

16. More than I desired, my dread arose; I stood full still, and durst not call; with open eyes and mouth full close I stood as mute as hawk in hall. I deemed that spiritual was the purport, and I dreaded ever what should befall lest she whom I saw there escaped me ere I could arrest her with my voice. But

[1] Literally, "pear-trees."
[2] "Raining influence," as it were.
[3] Uncertain; possibly "strong men."
[4] Literally, "Brimful my brains."
[5] Meaning not quite sure.
[6] Literally, "wise."
[7] i.e. the stream separated two joyous lands. Meaning a bit doubtful.
[8] i.e. the Heavenly Jerusalem.
[9] For the MS. *anunder shore* one is tempted to read *anunder gore* (garment), "under gore" being a favorite rime-tag with some of the romancers in such a connection.

that gracious and gay one without fault,[1] so smooth, so small, so seemly slight, rose up in her royal array — a precious piece in pearls bedight.

17. Set pearls of royal price there might man by grace have seen when she, fresh as fleur-de-lys, down the bank quickly took her way. All glistening white was her mantle,[2] open at sides and brightly bound with the purest margery pearls, methinks, that ever I saw yet with mine eyes. The long sleeves,[3] I wot and I ween, were adorned and set with double pearls; her kirtle of the same bright stuff was studded round with precious pearls.

18. A studded crown yet wore that girl, of margeries and no other stone, high pinnacled of clear white pearl, with blooming flowers wrought upon it. Her head had no other fillet, her own locks[4] covered her quite. Her semblant was stately as that of duke or earl; her hue more white than whalebone.[5] As bright as cut gold shone her locks, that lay lightly unbound over her shoulders. Her deep collar did not lack embroidery of precious pearls.

19. Set and sewed was every hem, at hands, at sides, at the openings, with white pearls and no other gem; and burnished white was her vesture. But a wondrous pearl without a flaw was set securely amidst her breast. A man's reason would be greatly baffled ere his mind could comprehend its size; no tongue, I think, would suffice to give an adequate account of that sight, so clean and clear and pure it was — that precious pearl where it was set.

20. Clad in pearl, that precious piece beyond the water came down the shore. From here to Greece was there never gladder man than I when she stood on the bank. She was nearer to me than aunt or niece; my joy therefore was much the more. Speech she proferred me, that dear being.[6] Inclining low, in womanly fashion, she doffed her crown of great treasure, and greeted me with blithe countenance. Glad was I that ever I was born, to answer that sweet one clad in pearls.

[1] Perhaps to be taken literally, "without gall." Doves and such gentle things were supposed to be devoid of gall.

[2] The MS. *beauuiys* is doubtful.

[3] Literally, "laps."

[4] The MS. *lere leke* is very difficult. *Here heke* (for *eke*), = hair also; and *here-leke* = hair-locks, have been proposed. *Hair lace* might be suggested; or *leke* might conceivably represent the Old Norse suffix *-leikr*; *here-leke* being then simply hair, growth of hair.

[5] i.e. ivory.

[6] Literally, "special spice."

V

21. "Oh pearl," quoth I, "in pearls clad, art thou my pearl that I have mourned, regretted by me lonely in the night? Much longing for thee have I concealed since into the grass thou glided from me. Pensive, impaired, I suffer pain, whilst thou to a life of joy art come in the land of Paradise, untouched by strife. What fate has borne my jewel hither, and left me in this grief and great anxiety? Since we were torn atwain and parted I have been a joyless jeweller."

22. Then that jewel clad in gentle gems raised her face and her gray eyes, set on her crown of orient pearl, and soberly thereafter gan she speak: "Sir, ye have reckoned amiss, to say that your pearl is all lost that is enclosed in a coffer as comely as this garden gracious gay; herein to bide forever, and play, where loss nor mourning come never nigh. Here were a treasure-chest indeed for thee if thou were a gentle jeweller.

23. "But, gentle jeweller, if thou must lose thy joy for a gem that was dear to thee, thou seemst to me bent on a mad purpose, and busiest thee for a slight reason. For that which thou lost was but a rose, that flowered and failed as nature decreed. Now, through the virtue of the chest that encloses it, it has become a pearl of price. — And thou hast called thy fate a thief, that manifestly has made for thee something out of nothing. Thou blamest the very cure of thy mischief. Thou art no natural jeweller."

24. A jewel to me then was this guest, and jewels were her gentle saws. "Forsooth," quoth I, "my blissful best one, my great distress thou takest all away. To be excused I make request; for I believed my pearl vanished. Now I have it I shall make merry and dwell with it in bright groves, and praise my Lord and all his laws, who has brought me near to this bliss. Now were I with you beyond these waves I were a joyful jeweller."

25. "Jeweller," then said that clean gem, "why jest ye men, so mad ye be? Three words hast thou spoken at once; and unadvised, forsooth, were all three. Thou knowest not what in the world one doth mean.

Thy words before thy wit gan fly. Thou sayest that thou believest me to be in this dale because thou canst see me with thine eyes; secondly thou sayest that thou thyself shalt dwelt with me right here; the third is, to pass this fair water — that may no joyful jeweller.

VI

26. "I hold that jeweller little to praise who believes[1] well what he sees with his eye; and much to blame and uncourteous him who believes our Lord would make a lie, who loyally promised to raise your life, though fortune caused your flesh to perish. Ye set his words all awry who believe nothing but ye see it; and that is a point of pride which evil beseems each good man, — to believe that no tale is quite true unless his own reason can judge of it.

27. "Judge now thyself whether thou knowest how to talk — as if a man should have words with God. Thou sayst thou shalt dwell in this precinct. Methinks it behoves thee first to ask leave, — and even then of permission thou mightst fail. Thou wishest over this water to cross; first thou must take other counsel; thy corse must colder sink[2] in the mould, for it was undone at the grove of Paradise; our first father abused it there. Through dreary death it behoves each man to pass ere over this stream the Lord suffer him."

28. "Doomest thou me," quoth I, "my sweet, to grief again, then I must perish. Now I have found what I lost, must I again forgo it ere ever I die? Why must I both miss and find it? My precious pearl causes me great pain. What serves treasure but to make man weep, when he must lose it again with sorrow? Now reck I never how I decline, nor how far from my land one banish me, when I have no part in my pearl. Except enduring grief what may men expect?"

29. "Thou expectest naught but deep distress," then said that wight; "why dost thou so? For din of grief over lesser losses oft many a man overlooks the greater. Thou oughtst the better to rule thyself, and love aye God, and weal and woe, for anger gains thee not a cress. Who needs must suffer, let him not be so wild; for though thou dance as any doe, leap, and cry thy wild remonstrances, yet when thou canst no further, to or fro, thou must abide what he shall adjudge.

30. "Judge, Lord! Ever ordain for him![3] He will not turn a foot from the way. Thy amends amount not to a mite, though thou shouldst for sorrow be never blithe. Cease thy rebellion, and end complaint, and seek his compassion right swiftly and earnestly. Thy prayer may move his pity, that mercy shall show her power; his comfort may alleviate thy languor, and lightly drive off thy afflictions; for marred or made, mourning and rejoicing,[4] all lies in him to ordain and judge."

VII

31. Then spake I to that damsel: "Let my Lord not be angry, if I rave rashly, spurning in speech. My heart was all stricken with loss, as welling water gushes out of the spring. I put myself ever in his mercy. Rebuke me not with fell words, though I go astray, my dear adored one; but help me kindly with your comfort, piteously thinking upon this — ye joined together[5] care and me, ye who once were the ground of all my bliss.

32. "My bliss and my bale both have ye been; but my sorrow was much the greater. Since thou wast removed from every danger, I wist never where my pearl was gone. Now that I see it, my anguish grows less. And when we separated we were at one; God forbid we now be wroth, we meet so seldom by stock or stone. Though ye know how to speak courteously, I am but muck, and manners[6] lack. But Christ's mercy, and Mary and John — these are the grounds of all my bliss.

33. "In bliss I see thee blithely set, and I a man all mournful and downcast. Ye take full little heed thereof, though I oft suffer fierce harms; but now that I am here in your presence, I would beseech without debate that ye would tell me in sober assent what manner of life ye lead early and late; for I am full fain that your estate has truly come to worship and weal; the highway of all my joy it is, the ground of all my bliss."

[1] Reading *leues* for *loues* of the MS.
[2] The MS. *keue* is difficult.
[3] Obscure lines. Possibly better, "Our Lord and Judge has ordained everything."
[4] A difficult passage.
[5] Literally, "made accord between."
[6] MS. *marerez mysse*, which might be translated "a botcher's failure."

34. "Now may bliss betide thee, sir!" then said that one so lovely of form and face; "and welcome be thou here, to walk and bide, for now thy speech to me is dear. Masterful mood and high pride, I promise thee, are thoroughly hated here. My Lord loves not to chide,[1] for meek are all who dwell near him; and when in his place thou shalt appear, be deeply devout in entire meekness. My Lord the Lamb loves ever such cheer; that is the ground of all my bliss.

35. "Thou sayst I lead a blissful life, and wouldst learn the degree thereof. Thou knowest well that when thy pearl departed I was full young and tender of age; but my Lord the Lamb through his Godhead, he took me to him in marriage, crowned me queen, in bliss to dwell for a length of days that ever shall endure. And endowed with all his heritage is his loved one; I am wholly his; his worth, his excellence, his nobility is the root and ground of all my bliss."

VIII

36. "Blissful one," said I, "can this be true? — be not displeased if I speak error — art thou the queen of the heavens blue, whom all this world must honour? We believe on Mary, whom grace sprang from, who bore in the flower of virginity a child. Who is it could remove the crown from her unless she surpassed her in some excellence? Now for her unique sweetness we call her the Phoenix of Araby, which flew peerless in its nature, like to the Queen of courtesy."

37. "Courteous Queen," then said that beautiful one, kneeling on the ground with face enfolded. "Matchless Mother and fairest Maid, blessed Beginner of every grace!" Then rose she up and gan pause, and spake to me at that time: "Sir, many chase and capture prey there;[2] but within this place are no supplanters; that Empress has all the heavens, and earth and hell are under her sway; yet none she will deprive of their heritage, for she is Queen of courtesy.

38. "The court of the kingdom of the living God has this property in its very being: each that arrives therein is queen or king of all the realm, and yet never dispossesses another; but each one is fain of the others' having, and would that their [3] crowns were worth five times as much — if their amending were possible. But my Lady, of whom Jesus sprang, she holds full high the empire over us all; and that displeases none of our company, for she is Queen of courtesy.

39. "In courtesy, as saith St. Paul, we are all members of Jesus Christ. So head and arm and leg and trunk [4] belong to his body so true and good. Right so is every Christian soul a limb belonging to the Master of might. Then consider whether [5] hate or any bitterness is rife or exists among thy limbs: thy head has neither anger nor resentment if thou bear a ring on arm or finger. So fare we all with love and liking to King and Queen [6] by courtesy."

40. "Courtesy," said I, "and great charity I believe to be among you. But — let my speech not grieve you —[7]

. . . . . .

thou raisest thyself over high in heaven, to make thee queen, who wast so young. What greater honour could he achieve that had endured in the cruel world, and lived in penance his whole life long, with bodily bale to buy him bliss? What greater worship could he attain than be crowned king by courtesy?

IX

41. "That courtesy is too free of deed if it be sooth that thou sayst. Thou didst not live two years among our people; thou knewest never how God to please nor to him pray, — no, neither Pater nor Creed. And made queen on the first day! I can not believe — so God me speed — that God would turn so wrongly aside; the rank of countess, damsel, by my faith, it were fair for thee to hold in heaven, — or else that of a lady of less degree. But a queen! — that is an attainment [8] too great."

42. "There is no limit of his goodness," then said to me that worthy wight; "for all is truth that he appoints, and he can do

[1] Perhaps "loves not chiding."
[2] Amending the MS. *here* to *pere*, = there, in your world. The line is difficult.
[3] The companions'.
[4] Literally, "navel"; most translate "nail."
[5] Reading *wher* for *what* of the text.
[6] The Lamb and Mary.
[7] A line missing.
[8] The word *date* in this set of stanzas is difficult of translation, its significance being excessively strained.

nothing but right. As Matthew tells in your mass, in the truthful gospel of God Almighty; in parable he gan it full readily divine, and likens it to heaven light. 'My realm,' he says, 'is like indeed to a lord that had a vineyard, I wot. The season of the year was come when to labour in the vineyard it was high time.

43. "'That time of year well know the hinds. The lord full early rose up to hire workmen to his vineyard, and finds there some to his purpose. Into accord they gan fall for a penny a day, and forth they go; they twine and work and take great pains, cut and bind and make it snug. About midmorn the lord to the market goes, and idle men finds he standing there. "Why stand ye idle?" he says to those. "Know ye not what day this is?"

44. "'"Ere break of day hither are we come"; so was all together their answer given;[1] "We have stood here since rose the sun, and no man bids us do aught." "Go into my vineyard; do what ye can," so said the lord, and confirmed it.[2] "What reasonable hire by night be run, I will pay you in thought and deed." They went into the vineyard and wrought, and all day the lord went his way, and brought new men to his vineyard. Wellnigh was passed the precious day.

45. "'At the time of evensong, an hour before the sun goes down, he saw there idle men full strong, and said to them with sober voice, "Why stand ye idle all day long?" They said their labour was nowhere sought. "Go to my vineyard, yeomen young, and work and do that which ye may." Soon the world became right dark; the sun was down and it waxed late. To take their hire he summoned them; the term of the day was all passed.

X

46. "'The time of day the lord perceived, called to the reve, "Man, pay the company; give them the hire that I them owe. And, further, that none may reprove me, set them all in a row and give each one alike a penny. Begin at the last that stands low, till that thou to the first attain." And then the first gan to complain, and said that they had travailled sore: "These but for an hour exerted themselves; it seems to us that we ought to have more."

47. "'"More have we deserved, it seems to us, that have suffered the day's heat, than these that wrought not two hours; and thou dost make them like to us." Then said the lord to one of those, "Friend, I will cause thee no loss; take what is thine own and go. I hired thee at a penny for the whole day;[3] why beginnest thou now to complain? Was not a penny thy covenant there? One may not plead for more than covenant. Why shouldst thou then ask more?"

48. "'"Furthermore, is not my giving lawful for me, to do with mine what pleases me? Or else thou dost lift a malicious eye because I am good and deceive none."[4] Thus shall I,' quoth Christ, 'apportion it: the last shall be the first that attains, and the first the last, be he never so swift; for many are called, though few are chosen.'[5] Thus poor men ever receive their part; though they may come late and be feeble, and though their labour ends shortly, the mercy of God is so much the more.

49. "More have I here of joy and bliss, of ladyship great and life's bloom, than all the wights in the world could win in the way of right and justice. Although I have but now begun — came into the vineyard at eventide — the Lord remembered my hire first; I was immediately paid in full. Others there were that gave more time, that toiled and sweat for long before, who yet of their hire nothing have — peradventure shall not for a year more."

50. Then further I spake and said outright, "Methinks thy tale unreasonable. God's righteousness is ready and evermore awake, or else Holy Writ is but a fable. In the Psalter[6] is a clear verse that declares a definite point: 'Thou rewardest each one according to his deserts, thou high King ever foreordaining.' Now if thou came to payment before him that endured the long day, then is the less in work the greater in reward; and the longer one works, the less he receives."

[1] The MS. reading "*sozt*" is difficult.

[2] The usual meaning of the MS. *made it tozt* would be, "was reluctant, made difficulties about it."

[3] MS. *agrete*, "for the whole," not perfectly clear.

[4] It is difficult to make logic of the conjunctions in this passage.

[5] The MS. *Be mykez* is difficult and no attempt is made to translate it.

[6] Psalm 62 : 12.

XI

51. "Of more and less in God's Kingdom," the gentle one said, "there is no distinction. For there is each man paid alike, whether little or much be his worth. For the gentle Chieftain is no niggard, whether he deal soft or hard. He pours his gifts like water from a spring, or floods from an exhaustless deep. Large is the franchise of the man who ever stood in awe of Him that rescues from sin;[1] no bliss is withheld[2] from him,[3] for the grace of God is great enough.

52. "But now, in order to overcome me, thou declarest that I have wrongly taken my penny here. Thou sayest that I that came too late, am not worthy so great hire. Where didst thou ever know any man abide so holy in his prayer that he in some way did not at length forfeit the reward of the clear heavens? And the older they were the oftener they did so: they left right and wrought wrong. Mercy and grace had to rescue them then, for the grace of God is great enough.

53. "But the innocent have enough of grace; as soon as they are born, lineally by the water of baptism they descend; then are they brought into the vineyard. Immediately the might of death causes their[4] day with darkness to decline. The gentle Lord then pays his servants that wrought no wrong ere they went thence. They did his commandment, they were within the vineyard; why should he not allow their labour, and pay them first at the end of the time, for the grace of God is great enough?

54. "Well known it is that all mankind first was wrought to perfect bliss. Our first father forfeited that through an apple that he bit upon. We were all damned for that meat to die in grief out of delight; and after to wend to the heat of hell, therein to dwell without respite. But there came a remedy quickly; rich blood ran on the rood so rough, and precious water then in that extremity; the grace of God waxed great enough.

55. "Enough there waxed out of that well, blood and water from the broad wound: the blood bought us from the bale of hell and delivered us from the second death. The water that followed the glaive so grimly ground is baptism, the sooth to tell, that washes away the dreadful guilts by which Adam in death us drowned. Now is there naught in the round world between us and bliss that he has not withdrawn; and in happy hour is bliss[5] restored, and the grace of God is great enough.

XII

56. "Grace enough the man may have who sins then anew, if he repent; but with sorrow and sighing he must it crave, and bide the pain thereto annexed; but right reason, that can not err, saves evermore the innocent; it is a doom that God never gave — that ever the guiltless should be harmed. The guilty may contrition reach and be through mercy haled to grace; but he that never stooped to guile — that innocent one is safe and right.

57. "Thus I know well in this case, two men to save is reasonable and good: the righteous man shall see his face, the harmless person shall come to him. The Psalter in a passage says it thus: 'Lord, who shall climb to thy high hill, or rest within thy holy place?' Himself to answer he is not slow: 'Who hath done no harm with his hands, that is of heart both clean and light, there shall his step ever be established.' The innocent is aye safe by right.

58. "The righteous man also shall approach that proper pile[6] who takes not his life in vain, nor flatters his neighbour with any guile. This righteous one Solomon saw plain, how kindly our King[7] gan him receive; by ways full straight he gan him lead,[8] and showed him the realm of God awhile, as though to say 'Lo, yon lovely isle! thou canst it win if thou be wight.' But certainly, without peril, the innocent is aye safe by right.

59. "Anent righteous men yet says one — David in the Psalter, if ever ye saw it — 'Lord, draw thy servant never into judgment, for none living to thee is justified.' Therefore to court when thou shalt come where all our causes shall be tried, allege thy right to be received by this same speech that I have espied. But He on the cross

[1] An extremely difficult and uncertain passage. See Osgood's note.
[2] The meaning of MS. *reparde* is doubtful.
[3] Literally, "them."
[4] Literally, "the."
[5] The MS. *þat*, subject of "is restored," is obscure.
[6] i. e. castle, edifice, the new Jerusalem.
[7] Manuscript dubious hereabouts.
[8] Literally, "restrain."

that bloody died, grievously pierced through the hands, grant thee to pass, when thou art tried, by innocence, and not by right!

60. "Whoso can read aright, let him look on the book and be advised how Jesus walked with the former people, and men brought their children to him. For hap and health that from him went, they fairly prayed him to touch their children. His disciples wrongfully bade let be, and with their words stayed full many. Jesus then said to them sweetly, 'Away! Let the children to me forthwith; for such is the heavenly kingdom arrayed.' The innocent is aye safe by right.

XIII

61. "His mild disciples then Jesus to him called, and said his kingdom could no wight win but he came thither right as a child. Otherwise should he never come therein. Harmless, true, and undefiled, without mote or speck of soiling sin — when such as these knock on the door, quickly to them shall one unpin the gate. There is the bliss that can not cease, which the jeweller sought through precious stones, and sold all his goods, both linen and wool, to buy him a pearl that was flawless.

62. "'This flawless pearl, that bought is dear, for which the jeweller gave all his goods, is like the realm of the clear heavens,' so said the Father of field and flood; for it is perfect, clean, and clear; and round without end, and blithe of mood, and common to all that righteous were. Lo, even in the middle of my breast it stood. My Lord the Lamb, that shed his blood, he placed it there in token of peace. I rede thee forsake the frantic world and purchase thy flawless pearl."

63. "Oh, flawless pearl, in pearls pure, that bears," said I, "the pearl of price, who formed for thee thy fair figure? Who wrought thy weeds he was full wise. Thy beauty came never from Nature; Pygmalion painted never thy face; nor did Aristotle with his learning tell the nature of these properties. Thy colour passes the fleur-de-lys; thine angel-bearing so purely courteous — tell me, bright one, what kind of office bears the pearl so flawless?"

64. "My flawless Lamb, who all redeemed," quoth she, "my dear Destiny, chose me, unmeet, to be his mate. At a certain time that union[1] became fitting — when I went from your dark world. He called me to his favour:[2] 'Come hither to me, my love so sweet, for mote nor spot is none in thee.' He gave me might and beauty too; in his blood he washed my weeds on the dais, and crowned me clean in virginity, and clad me in flawless pearls."

65. "Why, flawless bride that shines so bright, that has dignities so rich and great, what manner of thing may this Lamb be, who would wed thee unto his wife? Over all others didst thou climb so high to lead with him so stately[3] a life? So many a comely lady[4] in great suffering for Christ has lived, and thou hast all those dear ones driven out, and from that marriage all others kept — thou all alone, so stout and strong — a matchless maid and a flawless!"

XIV

66. "Flawless," replied that lovely queen, "unblemished I am, without blot, and that may I properly maintain; but 'matchless queen' then said I not. The Lamb's wives in bliss are we, a hundred and forty thousand together, as in the Apocalypse it is clear; St. John saw them all in a group on the hill of Sion — that seemly spot. The Apostle saw them in spiritual dream arrayed for the wedding in that hilltop, the new city of Jerusalem.

67. "Of Jerusalem I will in speech expound, if thou wilt know what his condition is — my Lamb, my Lord, my dear Jewel, my Joy, my Bliss, my Lover free. The prophet Isaiah of him spoke piteously — for his sweetness: 'That glorious, guiltless One that men slew for no deed of felony. As a sheep to the slaughter then was he led; and as a lamb that the clippers take in the field, so closed he his mouth to every query, when the Jews judged him in Jerusalem.'

68. "In Jerusalem was my Lover slain, and rent on the rood by villains cruel; all our griefs full ready to bear, he took on himself our heavy cares; with buffets was his face flayed that was so fair to look upon; for sin he accounted himself as nothing — he who never had sin of his own to control.

[1] Meaning doubtful. [2] More literally, "gentleness." [3] Literally, "lady-like." [4] Literally, "comely one under comb."

For us he let himself be beaten and bent, and stretched upon the cruel beam, as meek as lamb that made no plaint. For us he suffered in Jerusalem;

69. "Jerusalem, Jordan, and Galilee, where baptized the good St. John — his words accorded with those of Isaiah. When Jesus gan toward him go, he said of him this prophecy: 'Lo, God's Lamb as true as stone, that does away the heavy sins that all this world has wrought.' Himself he wrought never one, yet on himself he took them all. His generation who can reckon, that died for us in Jerusalem?

70. "Thus in Jerusalem my Lover sweet twice was accounted a lamb by true record of either prophet, for his mood so meek and all his bearing. The third time is meetly described in the Apocalypse. Amidst the throne, where saints sat, the apostle John saw him clearly, reading the book with square leaves, where seven signets were set together. And at that sight each power gan quail, in hell, in earth and Jerusalem.

XV

71. "This Jerusalem Lamb had never stain of other hue than wholly fair, which speck nor spot might touch, for the white wool so rich and full.[1] Therefore each soul that had never spot is to that Lamb a worthy wife; and, though each day a store he fetch, among us comes no other struggle nor strife, but each single one we would were five; — the more the merrier, so God me bless. In a great company our love thrives more in honour, and never less.

72. "Less of bliss can none bring to us who bear this pearl upon our breast, for they can have no stain who bear the crest of spotless pearl. Although our bodies moulder in the earth, and ye cry for sorrow without rest, we have thorough knowledge; by the death of One our hope is made perfect.[2] The Lamb gladdens us, our care is cast aside; he charms us all at every feast;[3] each one's bliss is full and best, and never one's honour the less.

73. "Lest thou disbelieve my seemly tale, it is written in a passage of the Apocalypse. 'I saw,' says John, 'the Lamb great and strong, stand on the mount of Sion, and with him maidens an' hundred thousand, and four and forty thousand more. On all their foreheads written I found the Lamb's name, his Father's also. A cry from heaven I heard then like the voice of many waters running turbulently, and like the thunder leaping in the black crags; that sound was never less.

74. "'Nevertheless, though it was a great shout and a loud voice, a note full new I heard them play; right pleasant was it to listen to. As harpers harp on their harps, that new song they sang full clear, in echoing notes a gentle lay. Full fairly they took up the tune together, right before God's chair; and the four beasts that him obey, and the elders so stately of mien, their song they sang never the less.'

75. "Nevertheless no one was ever so cunning, for all the craft that ever he knew, that of that song he could sing one note, except the band that follows the Lamb; for they are redeemed, far removed from the earth, as new fruit due to God. And to the gentle Lamb are they appointed as being like to himself of face and hue; for lying nor untrue tale never touched their tongue for any distress. That spotless band can never depart from the flawless Master."

76. "Nevertheless let my thoughts have place," said I, "my Pearl. Though I ask searching questions, it is not to tempt thy wit so keen, who to Christ's chamber art chosen. I am but muck and mire, and thou a lovely rose so rich; and thou abidest here by this blissful bank where living pleasure can never fail. Now, oh being of simplicity compact, I would ask thee one thing expressly, and though I be rude as a churl,[4] let my prayer avail nevertheless.

XVI

77. "Nevertheless earnestly I entreat you — if ye can allow it to be done, — as thou art glorious without gall, do not deny my rueful boon. Have ye no homes in castle wall, no manor where ye may meet and dwell? Thou tellest me of Jerusalem, the rich and royal, where David great was dight on throne; but in these groves it cannot lie; but in Judea it is, that noble dwelling. As ye are altogether[5] flawless, so should your dwellings be without blemish.

[1] Literally, "rank and rife." [2] This passage is not entirely satisfactory. [3] Possibly, "mass."

[4] The MS. *blose* is doubtful; possibly it is "flame."
[5] Literally, "under moon," a rime-tag.

78. "This unblemished band thou speakest of, of thousands thronged so great a rout, it behoves you to have, without a doubt, a great city, — for ye are many. Such a lovely array of precious jewels, — 't were evil done that ye should dwell outside. And by these banks where I tarry I see no building anywhere about. I trow ye dwell alone and live retired, to look on the glory of this gracious stream. If thou hast other dwellings stout, now direct me to that fair castle."

79. "The castle thou meanest in the land of Judea," then said to me that precious being,[1] "that is the city which the Lamb founded to suffer in sorely for man's sake — namely, the old Jerusalem; for there the old guilt was slaked. But the new Jerusalem, that came of God's sending, the apostle in the Apocalypse took for his theme. The Lamb devoid of all black spots has borne thither his fair band; and as his flock is without fleck, so is his city without sin.

80. "Two cities are to be distinguished, both called Jerusalem nevertheless — which is to signify to you naught but 'city of God,' or 'sight of peace.'[2] In the one our peace was made complete: the Lamb chose it to suffer in with pain. In the other is naught but peace to glean, that shall last for ever and aye. That is the city that we press to after our flesh is laid to rot; there glory and bliss shall ever increase for the band without a spot."

81. "Spotless maid so meek and mild," then said I to that lovely flower, "bring me to that fair dwelling, and let me see thy blissful bower." The bright one said: "That will God deny; thou may not enter within his hill. But of the Lamb I have obtained for thee through great favour a sight thereof. Outwardly thou may see that clean cloister, but inwardly not a foot; to step in the street thou hast no vigour, unless thou were clean without a spot.

XVII

82. "If I this city shall to thee disclose, go up toward this river's head; and I abreast on this side shall follow till thou to a hill be come." Then would I no longer bide, but glided by branches with lovely leaves, till I espied the hill, and gazed on the city as I pressed forward, revealed beyond the brook from me, that brighter shone than the sun with its shafts. In the Apocalypse is its fashion told, as describes it the apostle John.

83. As John the apostle saw it, so saw I that city of great renown, Jerusalem, so new and royally dight, as it was lighted from the heavens down. The burg was all of burned gold bright, like gleaming glass burnished clear, with gentle gems placed underneath; with bantels[3] twelve set on a base, and foundations twelve of rich work. Each tier was a different stone; as in the Apocalypse the apostle John fairly describes this same town.

84. As John in his writ named these stones, I knew their names after his count. Jasper was the first gem called, that I on the first base descried; it gleamed green in the lowest row; sapphire held the second place; then the chalcedony without flaw in the third tier shone pale and pure; the emerald was the fourth, so green of hue; the sardonyx the fifth stone; the sixth, the ruby, as in the Apocalypse the apostle John distinguished it.

85. John added yet the chrysolite as the seventh gem in the foundation; the eighth the beryl clear and white; the twin-hued topaz the ninth inlaid; the chrysophrase the tenth is called; the gentle jacinth the eleventh; the twelfth, the fairest of all, the amethyst, purple blent with blue. The wall above the bantels was of jasper that shone like glistening glass. I knew it by his devising in the Apocalypse, the apostle John's.

86. As John devised I saw further. These twelve steps were broad and steep. The fair city stood above them right square, as long, as broad, as high; the streets of gold like sheer glass, the wall of jasper that glinted like light;[4] the dwellings within were adorned with all kinds of jewelry that could be gathered together. Each side of the square stretched in this manner twelve furlongs space ere ever it ended, all squared

[1] Literally, "special spice."

[2] Such etymologizing of names is common in the Scriptures, and especially so in saints' legends.

[3] This perhaps means projecting courses of stone. The architectural details are not quite clear.

[4] The MS. *glayre* may be our glare of an egg, practically equivalent to varnish, gum; or glare, brightness, shining; or the rare AS. *glær*, glossed as "electrum," i.e. amber or a composition of gold and silver.

in height and length and breadth, for John the apostle saw it measured.

XVIII

87. Yet more I saw as John describes it. Each side of that place had three gates; so twelve in succession I espied; the entrances covered with rich plates, and each gate of a margery, a perfect pearl that never fades. Each in scripture displayed a name of one of Israel's children following their dates — that is to say, as their birth was. The eldest aye first thereon was put. Such a light there gleamed in all the streets they needed neither sun nor moon.

88. Of sun nor moon they had no need; for God himself was their lamplight, the Lamb their lantern, forsooth. Through him gleamed the town all bright. Through wall and house my glances went, for their subtle clearness hindered in no wise the light. The high throne there might ye behold decked with all its array, as John the apostle well describes. The high God himself sat upon it. A river ran from out the throne, which was brighter than both the sun and moon.

89. Sun nor moon shone never so sweet as the plenteous flood from out that floor. Swiftly it swung through every street without filth or impurity or slime. Church was there none within the city; no chapel or temple was ever set there. The Almighty was their minster meet, the Lamb their sacrifice.[1] The gates were never closed, but evermore open at each street; there none enters to take his abode that bears any blemish beneath the moon.

90. The moon can gain no might therein; too spotty she is, of nature[2] too grim; and also there is never night. Why should the moon there her compass climb, and strive to match the glorious light which shines upon that river's brink? The planets are in too poor a plight, and the very sun far too dim. About the water are trees full bright that early bear twelve fruits of life. Twelve times a year they bear full plenteously, renew themselves at each moon.

91. So great a marvel under the moon might no fleshly heart endure, as when I gazed upon that city, so wondrous was the fashion thereof. I stood as still as dazed quail for the strangeness of that glorious[3] vision, so that I felt neither rest nor toil, so was I ravished with the pure radiance. For I dare say with sure conscience, that had a man in the body endured that joy, though all clerks had him in care, his life were lost under the moon.

XIX

92. Right as the great moon rises ere the day-gleam has quite gone down, so suddenly in wondrous wise I was ware of a procession. The whole city of rich device was suddenly full without any summons of such virgins, clad in the same guise, as was my blissful one in her crown; and crowned were they all in the same fashion, adorned with pearls and white weeds; on each one's breast was bounden fair the blissful pearl with great[4] delight.

93. With great delight they glided together in the golden streets that gleamed as glass; hundreds of thousands I wot there were, and all of a suit were their liveries, — hard to know who had the gladdest mien. The Lamb proudly passed before, with his seven horns of clear red gold. Like precious pearls were his weeds. Toward the throne they go in company. Though they were many, no press ensued; but mild as modest maidens at mass, so passed they forth with great delight.

94. The delight that his coming inspired, too great were it to tell of. The elders, when he approached, fell prone at his feet. Legions of angels, gathered together, there cast incense of sweet smell. Then glory and glee were broached anew; and all sang for love of that fair Jewel; that sound might strike through the earth to hell, that the Virtues of heaven for joy gave forth. To love the Lamb in the midst of his troop I caught indeed a great delight.

95. Delight to describe the Lamb marvellously seized my mind. He was best, blithest, and most to prize, that ever I heard mentioned; so beauteous white were his weeds, his looks so simple, himself so courteous. But a wound full wide and wet showed near his heart, through the rent skin, and from his white side his blood

[1] "Sacrifice" is the object of the obscure word *reget*, possibly meaning "to reproduce."
[2] Literally, "body."
[3] Text *freuch*, of uncertain meaning.
[4] Reading doubtful. Possibly "without delay," a rime-tag something like *boun* translated "fair" in the same sentence.

sprang forth. Alas! thought I, who committed that crime? Any breast ought to have shrivelled for sorrow ere it had taken delight in such a deed.

96. The Lamb's delight none needed to doubt; that[1] he was hurt and had a wound, in his bearing was never apparent, so glorious glad were his glances. I looked among his fair troop, beholding how they were filled with life, and there I saw my little queen, that I weened had stood by me in the glade. Lord, much mirth was it she made among her mates that were so white! That sight made me think of wading over in the delight of my love-longing.

XX

97. Delight drove me in eye and ear; my man's mind melted to madness; when I saw my lovely one, I would be there, though she were withdrawn beyond the water. I thought that nothing could frighten me, shake my resolution, or give me pause; and to start into the stream should none hinder me, to swim the space, though I drowned there. But from that design I was deterred. When I was about to start astray into the stream I was recalled from that plan; it was not my Prince's pleasure.

98. It pleased him not that I so pressed over marvellous meres in mad intent; though I was rash and rude in my haste, yet I was quickly restrained; for, right as I rushed to the bank, that very violence snatched me out of my dream. Then I wakened in that fair garden, my head laid upon the hill where my pearl fell to ground. I stretched and fell into a great fright; and sighing to myself I said, "Now may all be to that Prince's pleasure."

99. Yet it pleasured me ill to be outcast so suddenly from that fair region, from all those sights so beauteous and bright. A heavy longing struck me into a swoon, and ruefully then I began to cry: "O pearl," quoth I, "of great renown, it was dear to me, that which thou didst teach in this true vision." If it be a true and soothfast speech, that thou so roamest in garland gay, then well is me in this dungeon of grief, that thou art dear to that Prince.

100. Had I aye inclined to that Prince's favour, and yearned for no more than was given to me, and held me there in true intent, as the pearl prayed me that was so advanced — as sooner drawn to God's presence — to more of his mysteries had I been led. But ever would man seize more of fortune than may by right cleave to him; therefore my joy was soon taken away, and I cast from the country that lasts for aye. Lord, mad they are that strive against thee, or proffer thee aught against thy pleasure.

101. To please the Prince or gain his peace is full easy for the good Christian, for I have found him both day and night, a God, a Lord, a Friend full fine. On this mound this fortune I experienced, bowed down with pity for my pearl; and afterwards I betook it to God, in the dear joy and memory of Christ, whom, in the form of bread and wine, the priest shows us every day. May he grant us to be his lowly servants, and precious pearls unto his pleasure.

Amen. Amen.

[1] Emending the MS. *paz* to *pat*.

SYR GAWAYN AND THE GRENE KNY3T[1]

[FYTTE THE FIRST]

I

SIÞEN[2] þe sege & þe assaut wat3 sesed at Troye,
Þe bor3 brittened & brent to brondes & aske3,
Þe tulk þat þe trammes of tresoun *per* wro3t,
Wat3 tried for his tricherie, þe trewest on erthe ;
Hit wat3 Ennias þe athel, & his high*e* kynde,
Þat siþen depreced pr*o*uinces,[3] & patroun*es* bicome
Welne3e of al þe wele i*n* þe west iles,
Fro riche Romulus to Rome ricchis hym swyþe,
W*ith* gret bobbaunce þat bur3e he biges vpon fyrst,
& neuenes hit his aune nome, as hit now hat ;
Ticius (turnes) to Tuskan, & teldes bigynnes ;
Langaberde i*n* Lumbardie lyftes vp homes ;
& fer ou*er* þe French flod Felix Brut*us*
On mony bonkkes ful brode Bretayn he sette3,
wyth wynne ;[4]
Where werre, & wrake, & wonder,
Bi syþe3 hat3 wont *per-inne*,
& oft boþe blysse & blun*d*er
Ful skete hat3 skyfted synne.

II

Ande quen[5] þis Bretayn wat3 bigged bi þis burn rych,
Belde bredden þer-i*n*ne, baret þat lofden,
In mony turned[6] tyme tene þat wro3ten ;
Mo ferlyes on þis folde han fallen here oft
Þen in any o*per* þat I wot, syn þat ilk tyme.
Bot of alle þat here bult of Bretaygne kyn*g*es
Ay wat3 Arthur þe hendest, as I haf herde telle ;
For-þi an aun*t*er in erde I attle to schawe,
Þat a selly in si3t sum*m*e men hit holden,
& an outrage awenture of Arthure3 wonde*re*3,
If 3e wyl lysten þis laye bot on littel quile,
I schal telle hit, as-tit, as I *in* tou*n* herde,
with tonge ;
As hit is stad & stoken,
In stori stif & stronge,
W*ith* lel lette*r*es loken,[6]
In londe so hat3 ben longe.

[1] The symbol 3 is the Anglo-Saxon form of *g*, and is a modification of the Latin letter. It was retained by later scribes principally for the guttural *gh* as in *kny3t*, for the *y*-sound at the beginning of a word, as in *3et*, and for the final *z*-sound, as in *aske3*. The spellings *wat3*, *hat3* for *was* and *has* are peculiar.

[2] þ is the Anglo-Saxon symbol for *th*, which lasted till the 15th century, and as *y* till later — e. g., in *ye* = *the*. It is the old rune "thorn." [3] *u* and *v*, originally the same symbol, are both written *u*.

[4] These "bobs" especially, and the rhyming 4-line "wheel" at the end of the stanzas, are often almost meaningless, and difficult to translate. [5] The *qu* is the Northern way of writing Anglo-Saxon *hw*, our *wh*.

[6] Such "conceited," "precious" or far-fetched terms and tags are characteristic of the later alliterative verse.

III

Þis kyng lay at Camylot vpon kryst-masse,
With mony luflych lorde, ledez of þe best,
Rekenly of þe rounde table alle þo rich breþer,
With rych reuel oryzt, & rechles merþes;
Þer tourneyed tulkes bi-tymez ful mony,
Justed ful Jolilé þyse gyntyle knizтes,
Syþen kayred to þe court, caroles to make.
For þer þe fest watz ilyche ful fiften dayes
With alle þe mete & þe mirþe þat men couþe a-vyse;
Such glaumande gle glorious to here,
Dere dyn vp-on day, daunsyng on nyztes,
Al watz hap upon hezе in hallez & chambrez,
With lordez & ladies, as leuest him þozt;
With all þe wele of þe worlde þay woned þer samen,
Þe most kyd knyztes vnder krystes seluen,
& þe louelokkest ladies þat euer lif haden,
& he þe comlokest kyng þat þe court haldes;
For al watz þis fayre folk in her first age,
on sille;
Ie hapnest vnder heuen,
Kyng hyzest mon of wylle,
Hit were now gret nye to neuen
So hardy a here on hille.

IV

Wyle nw zer watz so zep þat hit wat nwe cummen,
Þat day doubble on þe dece watz þe douth serued,
Fro þe kyng watz cummen with knztes in to þe halle,
Þe chauntre of þe chapel cheued to an ende;
Loude crye watz þer kest of clerkez & oþer,
Nowel nayted o-newe, neuened ful ofte;
& syþen riche forth runnen to reche honde-selle,
Zezed zeres ziftes on hiz, zelde hem bi hond,
Debated busyly aboute þo giftes;
Ladies lazed ful loude, þo þay lost haden,
& he þat wan watz not worth, þat may ze wel trawe.
Alle þis mirþe þay maden to þe mete tyme;
When þay had waschen, worþyly þay wenten to sete,
Þe best burne ay abof, as hit best semed;
Whene Guenore ful gay, grayþed in þe myddes,
Dressed on þe dere des, dubbed al aboute,
Smal sendal bisides, a selure hir ouer
Of tryed Tolouse, of Tars tapites in-noghe,
Þat were enbrawded & beten wyth þe best gemmes,
Þat myzt be preued of prys wyth penyes to buy,
in daye;
Þe comlokest to discrye,
Þer glent with yzen gray;
A semloker þat euer he syze,
Soth mozt no mon say.

SIR GAWAIN AND THE GREEN KNIGHT

FYTTE THE FIRST

1. After the siege and the assault had ceased at Troy, the city been destroyed and burned to brands and ashes, the warrior who wrought there the trains of treason was tried for his treachery, the truest on earth.[1] This was Aeneas the noble; he and his high kindred afterwards conquered provinces, and became patrons of well nigh all the wealth in the West Isles. As soon as rich Romulus turns him to Rome, with great pride he at once builds that city, and names it with his own name, which it now has; Ticius turns to Tuscany and founds dwellings; Longobard raises homes in Lombardy; and, far over the French flood, Felix Brutus establishes Britain joyfully on many broad banks, where war and waste and wonders by turns have since dwelt, and many a swift interchange of bliss and woe.

2. And when this Britain was founded by this great hero, bold men loving strife bred therein, and many a time they wrought destruction. More strange things have happened in this land since these days than in any other that I know; but of all the British kings that built here, Arthur was ever the most courteous, as I have heard tell. Therefore, I mean to tell of an adventure in the world, which some count strange and extraordinary even among the wonders of Arthur. If ye will listen to this lay but a little while, I will tell it forthright as I heard it told in town, as it is set down in story that cannot be changed, long written in the land in true words.

3. This King lay royally at Camelot at Christmas tide with many fine lords, the best of men, all the rich brethren of the Round Table, with right rich revel and careless mirth. There full many heroes tourneyed betimes, jousted full gaily; then returned these gentle knights to the court to make carols.[2] For there the feast was held full fifteen days alike with all the meat and the mirth that men could devise. Such a merry tumult, glorious to hear; joyful din by day, dancing at night. All was high joy in halls and chambers with lords and ladies as pleased them best. With all the weal in the world they dwelt there together, the most famous knights save only Christ, the loveliest ladies that ever had life, and he, the comeliest of kings, who holds the court. For all this fair company were in their prime in the hall, the happiest troop under heaven with the proudest of kings. Truly it would be hard to name anywhere so brave a band.

4. When New Year was fresh and but newly come, the court was served double on the dais. As soon as the king with his knights was come into the hall, the chanting in the chapel came to an end; loud was the cry there of clerks and others. Noel was celebrated anew, shouted full often; and afterwards the great ones ran about to take handsel;[3] called aloud for New Year's gifts, paid them out briskly, busily discussed the gifts; ladies laughed full loud, though they had lost; and he that won was not wroth, that may ye well trow. All this mirth they made till the meat time. When they had washed, worthily they went to their seats, the best man ever above, as it best behoved. Queen Guinevere full beauteous was set in the midst, placed on the rich dais adorned all about. Fine silk at the sides, a canopy over her of precious cloth of Toulouse, and tapestries of Tars,[4] that were embroidered and set with the best gems that money could buy. Truly no man could say that he ever beheld a comelier lady than she, with her dancing gray eyes.

5. But Arthur would not eat till all were

[1] Construction clear, though sense odd. Antenor and Aeneas were the traitors who in the mediæval story of Troy handed over the city to the Greeks. Antenor remained unpopular, but Aeneas suffered no loss of reputation. See Lydgate's *Troy Book* in the publications of the Early English Text Soc., Bk. IV, l. 4539 f.

[2] Dancing and singing in a ring.

[3] New Year's gifts of good omen.

[4] Oriental figured stuff.

served. He was so merry in his mirth, and somewhat childlike in his manner; his life pleased him well; he loved little either to lie long or to sit long, so busied him his young blood and his wild brain. And another custom moved him also, that he through chivalry had taken up; he would never eat upon such a dear day before he was told an uncouth tale of some adventurous thing, of some great marvel that he could believe, of ancient heroes, of arms, or of other adventures; or unless some person demanded of him a sure knight to join with him in jousting, to incur peril, to risk life against life, trusting each in the other, leaving the victory to fortune. This was the king's custom whenever he held court at each goodly feast among his free company in the hall. And so with undaunted face he strides stoutly to his seat on that New Year, making great mirth with everybody.

6. Thus the great king stands waiting before the high table, talking of trifles full courteously. The good Gawain was placed there beside Guinevere, and Agravain of the Hard Hand sat on the other side, both of them the king's sister's sons and full sure knights. Bishop Baldwin at the top begins the table, and Ywain, Urien's son, ate by himself. These were placed on the dais and honorably served, and after them many a good man at the side tables. Then the first course came in with blare of trumpets, which were hung with many a bright banner. A new noise of kettle-drums with the noble pipes, wild and stirring melodies wakened the echoes; that many a heart heaved full high at their tones. Dainties of precious meats followed, foison of fresh viands, and on so many dishes that it was difficult to find place before the people to set on the cloth the silver that held the several courses. Each man as he himself preferred partook without hesitation. Every two [1] had twelve dishes between them, good beer and bright wine both.

7. Now will I tell you no more of their service, for everybody must well understand that there was no lack of opportunity for the people to take their food.[2] Another noise full new suddenly drew nigh, for scarcely had the music ceased a moment, and the first course been properly served in the court, than there burst in at the hall door an awesome being, in height one of the tallest men in the world; from the neck to the waist so square and so thick was he, and his loins and his limbs so long and so great, that half giant I believed him to have been, or, at any rate, the largest of men, and withal the handsomest in spite of his bulk, that ever rode; for though his back and breast were so vast, yet his belly and waist were properly slim; and all his form according, full fairly shaped. At the hue of his noble face men wondered; he carried himself in hostile fashion and was entirely green.

8. All green was this man and his clothing; a straight coat sat tight to his sides; a fair mantle above, adorned within; the lining showed, with costly trimming of shining white fur; and such his hood also, that was caught back from his locks and lay on his shoulders, the hem well stretched; [3] hose of the same green, that clung to his calf; and clean spurs under, of bright gold upon silk bands richly barred, and shoes [4] on his shanks as the hero rides. And all his vesture verily was clean verdure, both the bars of his belt, and the other beauteous stones that were set in fine array about himself and his saddle, worked on silk. It would be too difficult to tell the half of the trifles that were embroidered there, with birds and flies, with gay gauds of green, — the gold ever in the middle; the pendants of the poitrel, the proud crupper, the bits, — and all the metal was enamelled; the stirrups that he stood on were coloured the same, and his saddle bow likewise, and his fine reins [5] that glimmered and glinted all of green stones. The horse that he rode on was of the same colour too, a green horse, great and thick, a steed full stiff to guide, in gay embroidered bridle, and one right dear to his master.

9. This hero was splendidly dressed in green; and the hair of his head matched that of his horse; [6] fair flowing locks enfolded his shoulders; a beard as big as a bush hung

[1] It was extremely sumptuous having only two at a mess; i. e. only two sharing the same cup and platter.

[2] It seems to make somewhat better sense if we transpose, as has here been done, lines 132 and 133; otherwise this passage means that a second course came in heralded by new music.

[3] Translation doubtful.

[4] Word doubtful.

[5] Our "reins" is a mere stop-gap. The MS. has the puzzling *sturtes*.

[6] Translating *hors swete* of the MS. as "horse's suite."

over his breast; and it, together with his splendid hair that reached from his head, was trimmed evenly all round above his elbows, so that half his arms were caught thereunder in the manner of a king's hood,[1] that covers his neck. The mane of that great horse was much like it, very curly and combed, with knots full many folded in with gold wire about the fair green, — always one knot of the hair, another of gold. The tail and the forelock were twined in the same way, and both bound with a band of bright green, set with full precious stones the whole length of the dock, and then tied up with a thong in a tight knot; where rang many bells full bright of burnished gold. Such a steed in the world, such a hero as rides him, was never beheld in that hall before that time. His glances were like bright lightning, so said all that saw him. It seemed as if no man could endure under his blows.

10. He had neither helm nor hauberk, nor gorget, armour nor breastplate, nor shaft nor shield to guard or to smite; but in his one hand he had a holly twig, that is greenest when groves are bare, and an axe in his other, a huge and prodigious one, a weapon merciless almost beyond description; the head had the vast length of an ell-yard, the blade all of green steel and of beaten gold; the bit[2] brightly burnished, with a broad edge, as well shaped for cutting as sharp razors. The stern warrior gripped it by[3] the steel of its stout staff, which was wound with iron to the end of the wood and all engraven with green in beauteous work. A lace was lapped about it, that was fastened at the head, and tied up often along the helve, with many precious tassels attached on rich embroidered buttons of the bright green. This hero turns him in and enters the hall, riding straight to the high dais, fearless of mischief. He greeted never a one, but looked loftily about, and the first word that he uttered was: "Where is the governor of this company? Gladly I would see that hero and speak with him."

He cast his eye on the knights and rode fiercely up and down, stopped and gan ponder who was there the most renowned.

11. All gazed fixedly on the man, for everybody marvelled what it might mean, that a knight and a horse could have such a colour: as green grown as the grass, and greener, it seemed; shining brighter than green enamel on gold. All were amazed who stood there, and stalked nearer to him, with all the wonder in the world what he would do; for many marvels had they seen, but such never before. Therefore for phantom and faery the folk there deemed it; and for that reason many a noble warrior was slow to answer, and all were astonished at his voice and sat stone still in a deep silence through the rich hall. Their voices[4] sank as though they had suddenly fallen asleep. I deem, however, that it was not all for fear, but somewhat for courtesy. But now let him to whom all defer undertake the wight.

12. Then Arthur before the high dais beheld that adventure, and saluted the stranger properly, for never was he afraid, and said, "Sir, welcome indeed to this place. I am called Arthur, the head of this hostel. Light courteously down and tarry, I pray thee; and whatso thy will is we shall wit after."

"Nay, so help me he that sits on high," quoth the hero. "To dwell any time in this house was not my errand; but because the fame of this people is lifted up so high, and thy town and thy men are held the best, the stoutest in steel gear on steeds to ride, the wightest and the worthiest of the world's kind, and proved opponents in other proper sports; and here courtesy is known, as I have heard tell, — it is this that has enticed me hither certainly at this time. You may be sure by this branch that I bear here that I pass in peace and seek no quarrel; for if I had set out with a company in fighting fashion, I have a hauberk at home and a helm both, a shield and a sharp spear shining bright, and other weapons to wield, I ween well also; but since I wished no war, my weeds are softer. Now if thou be as bold as all men tell, thou wilt grant me graciously the game that I ask."

Arthur knew how to answer, and said: "Sir courteous knight, if it is battle that thou cravest, thou shalt not fail of a fight here."

[1] The word *capados* here translated "hood" is rare. It might conceivably mean "camail," a protection of mail for the neck and part of the head, that hung down from or under the helm.

[2] "Bit" is still used for the cutting edge of an axe.

[3] Not in the MS.

[4] Possibly "faces" or "looks."

13. "Nay, I demand no fight; in faith I tell thee there are but beardless children about on this bench. If I were hasped in arms on a high steed there is no man here to match me, their might is so weak. Therefore I crave in this court a Christmas game, for it is Yule and New Year, and here are many gallants. If there be a man in this house who holds himself so hardy, is so bold in his blood, so rash in his head, that he dares stiffly strike one stroke for another, I shall give him as my gift this rich gisarm, this axe, that is heavy enough, to handle as he likes; and I shall abide the first blow as bare as I sit. If any warrior be wight enough to try what I propose, let him leap lightly to me and take this weapon — I quit-claim it forever, let him keep it as his own — and I shall stand him a stroke firmly on this floor. At another time, by our Lady, thou wilt grant me the boon of dealing him another blow; I will give him respite of a twelvemonth and a day. Now hie, and let us see quickly if any herein dare say aught."

14. If he had astonished them at first, stiller were then all the retainers in hall, the high and the low. The warrior on his steed settled himself in his saddle, and fiercely his red eyes he reeled about; bent his thick brows, shining green; and waved his beard, awaiting whoso would rise. When none would answer him he coughed aloud, stretched himself haughtily and began to speak; "What! Is this Arthur's house," said the hero then, "that is famous through so many realms? Where is now your pride and your conquests, your fierceness, and your wrath and your great words? Now is the revel and the renown of the Round Table overcome by the word of a single man; for all tremble for dread without a blow shown."

With this he laughed so loud that the lord grieved; the blood shot for shame into his fair face. He waxed as wroth as the wind; and so did all that were there. The king so keen of mood then stood near that proud man.

15. "Sir," said he, "by heaven thy asking is foolish; and as thou hast demanded folly, it behooves thee to find it. I know no man that is aghast of thy great words. Give me now thy gisarm, for God's sake, and I will grant thy boon that thou hast bidden."

Quickly he leaped to him and caught at his hand; and the other alights fiercely on foot. Now Arthur has his axe, and grips the helve; he whirls it sternly about as if he meant to strike with it. The bold stranger stood upright before him, higher than any in the house by a head and more; with stern cheer he stood there, stroked his beard, and with cool countenance drew down his coat, no more afraid or dismayed for Arthur's great strokes than if some one had brought him a drink of wine upon the bench.

Gawain, that sat by the queen, turned to the king: "I beseech now with all courtesy that this affair might be mine."

16. "Would ye, worthy lord," quoth Gawain to the king, "bid me step from this bench and stand by you there, — that I without rudeness might leave this table, and that my liege lady liked it not ill — I would come to your help before your rich court; for methinks it is obviously unseemly that such an asking is made so much of in your hall, even though ye yourself be willing to take it upon you, while so many bold ones sit about you on the bench; than whom, I ween, none under heaven are higher of spirit, nor more mighty on the field where strife is reared. I am the weakest, I know, and feeblest of wit; and to tell the truth there would be the least loss in my life. I am only to praise forasmuch as ye are my uncle; no other nobility than your blood know I in my body. And since this adventure is so foolish, it belongs not to you; I have asked it of you first; give it to me. Let this great court decide[1] if I have not spoken well."

The heroes took counsel together and they all gave the same advice, — to free the crowned king and give the game to Gawain.

17. Then the king commanded Gawain to rise from the table; and he right quickly stood up and made himself ready, kneeled down before the king and took the weapon; and Arthur lovingly left it to him, lifted up his hand and gave him God's blessing, and gladly bade him be hardy both of heart and of hand. "Take care, cousin," quoth the king, "that thou give him a cut; and if thou handle him properly, I readily believe

[1] This word is supplied. Perhaps "speak" would be more conservative.

that thou shalt endure the blow which he shall give after."

Gawain goes to the man with gisarm in hand; and he boldly awaits him, shrinking never a whit. Then speaks to Sir Gawain the knight in the green; "Rehearse we our agreement before we go farther. First I conjure thee, hero, how thou art called, that thou tell me it truly, so that I may believe it."

"In good faith," quoth the knight, "Gawain am I called, who give you this buffet, whatever befalls after; and at this time twelvemonth I am to take from thee another with whatever weapon thou wilt, and from no wight else alive."

The other answers again, "Sir Gawain, so thrive I as I am heartily glad that thou shalt give this blow."

18. "By Gog," quoth the green knight, "Sir Gawain, it delights me that I am to get at thy fist what I have requested here; and thou hast readily and truly rehearsed the whole of the covenant that I asked of the king, save that thou shalt assure me, sir, by thy troth, that thou wilt seek me thyself wheresoever thou thinkest I may be found upon the earth, and fetch for thyself such wages as thou dealest me today before this rich company."

"Where should I seek thee?" quoth Gawain. "Where is thy place? I know never where thou livest, by him that wrought me; nor do I know thee, knight, thy court, nor thy name. But tell me truly the way and how thou art called, and I will use all my wit to win my way thither, — and that I swear thee, for a sooth, and by my sure troth."

"New Year will suffice for that; no more is needed now," quoth the man in green to Gawain the courteous. "To tell the truth, after I have received thy tap, and thou hast smitten me well, I shall promptly inform thee of my house and my home and mine own name. Then thou mayest inquire about my journey and hold promise; and if I speak no speech, then thou speedest the better, for thou mayest linger at ease in thy land and seek no further. Take now thy grim tool to thee and let us see how thou knockest."

"Gladly, sir, for sooth," quoth Gawain as he strokes his axe.

19. The green knight on the ground prepared himself properly. With the head a little bowed he disclosed the flesh. His long, lovely locks he laid over his crown, and let the naked nape of his neck show for the blow. Gawain gripped his axe and gathered it on high; the left foot he set before on the ground, and let the axe light smartly down on the naked flesh,[1] so that the sharp edge severed the giant's bones, and shrank through the clear flesh[2] and sheared it in twain, till the edge of the brown steel bit into the ground. The fair head fell from the neck to the earth, and many pushed it with their feet where it rolled forth. The blood burst from the body and glistened on the green. Yet never faltered nor fell the hero for all that; but stoutly he started up with firm steps, and fiercely he rushed forth where the heroes stood, caught his lovely head, and lifted it up straightway. Then he turned to his steed, seized the bridle, stepped into the steel bow and strode aloft, holding the head in his hand by the hair; and as soberly the man sat in his saddle as if no mishap had ailed him, though he was headless on the spot. He turned his trunk about — that ugly body that bled. Many a one of them thought that he had lost his reason.

20. For he held the head straight up in his hand; turned the face toward the highest on the dais; and it lifted up the eyelids and looked straight out, and spoke thus much with its mouth, as ye may now hear: — "Look Gawain, that thou be ready to go as thou hast promised, and seek loyally, hero, till thou find me; as thou hast promised in this hall in the hearing of these knights. To the green chapel go thou, I charge thee, to receive such a blow as thou hast dealt. Thou deservest to be promptly paid on New Year's morn.[3] As the knight of the green chapel many men know me; therefore, if thou strivest to find me, thou shalt never fail. And so come, or it behooves thee to be called recreant."

With a wild rush he turned the reins, and flew out at the hall door — his head in his hand — so that the fire of the flint flew from the foal's hoofs. To what country he vanished knew none there; no more than they wist whence he was come. The king and Gawain roared with laughter at that

[1] Some such word has to be supplied after naked.
[2] "Grease" in the original.
[3] Morris's punctuation of this passage has been altered.

green man; but this adventure was reckoned a marvel among men.

21. Though the courteous king wondered in his heart, he let no semblance be seen, but said aloud to the comely queen with courteous speech, "Dear dame, today be never dismayed; well becoming are such tricks at Christmas, in lack of entertainment, to laugh and sing about among these pleasant carols of knights and ladies. Nevertheless I may well go to my meat, for I can not deny that I have seen a marvel." He glanced at Sir Gawain and said cheerfully, "Now, sir, hang up thine axe; it has hewn enough." And it was put above the dais to hang on the tapestry where all men might marvel at it, and by it avouch the wonderful happening. Then they turned to the board, these heroes together — the king and the good knight — and the keen men served them double of all dainties, as was most fitting; with all manner of meat, and minstrelsy both. They spent that day in joy until it came to an end. Now take care, Sir Gawain, that thou blench not for the pain to prosecute this adventure that thou hast taken on hand.

FYTTE THE SECOND

1. This hansel of adventures had Arthur at the beginning, in the young year, since he yearned to hear boasting. Although there was little news when they went to their seats, now they are provided with stern work,[1] their hands quite full. Gawain was glad to begin those games in the hall; but it would not be surprising if the end were heavy; for though men be merry in mind when they have much drink, yet a year runs full swiftly, and yields never the same; the beginning full seldom matches the end. And so this Yule went by, and the year after it, each season in turn following the other. After Christmas came the crabbed Lent, that tries the flesh with fish and more simple food. But then the weather of the world quarrels with winter, and though the cold still clings, the clouds lift; copiously descends the rain in warm showers, and falls upon the fair earth. Flowers show there; green are the garments both of fields and of groves; birds hurry to build, and lustily they sing for the solace of the soft summer, that follows thereafter. Blossoms swell into bloom in rows rich and rank; and lovely notes are heard in the beauteous wood.

2. After the season of summer with the soft winds, when Zephyrus blows on seeds and herbs, happy is the plant that waxes then, when the dank dew drops from the leaves, to await the blissful glance of the bright sun. But then harvest hastens and hardens it soon: warns it to wax full ripe against the winter. He drives with drought the dust to rise, — from the face of the earth to fly full high. The wild wind of the welkin wrestles with the sun. The leaves fall from the bough and light on the ground. The grass becomes all gray that erst was green. Then all ripes and rots that which formerly flourished; and thus runs the year in yesterdays many; and winter returns again without asking any man,[2] till the Michelmas moon has come in wintry wise. Then thinks Gawain full soon of his anxious voyage.

3. Yet till Allhallows day with Arthur he lingers; and Arthur made a feast on that festival for the hero's sake, with great and gay revel of the Round Table. Knights full courteous and comely ladies all for love of that man were in sorrow; but nevertheless they spoke only of mirth; and many a joyless one there made jests for his gentle sake. After meat he mournfully addresses his uncle, and speaks of his passage, and openly he says — "Now, liege lord of my life, leave I ask of you. Ye know the cost of this case; I do not care to tell you even a trifle of its dangers;[3] but I am ready to start for the frav no later than tomorrow morn, to seek the man in the green, as God will guide me."

Then the best of the castle gathered together, Ywain and Erec, and others full many, Sir Dodinel de Sauvage, the Duke of Clarence, Lancelot and Lyonel and Lucan the Good, Sir Bors and Sir Bedever, big men both, and many other proud ones, with Mador de la Port. All this company of the court came nearer to the king, to counsel the knight, with care at their hearts. There was much deep grief felt in the hall that so worthy a one as Gawain should go on that errand, to endure a sorry dint and

[1] Morris's punctuation of this passage has been changed.

[2] Passage a bit vague.

[3] Morris's punctuation altered.

deal none himself with his brand. But the knight ever made good cheer, and said, "Why should I swerve from stern and strange destiny? What can a man do but try?"

4. He lingered there all that day, and on the morn made ready. Early he asked for his arms, and they were all brought. First a carpet of Toulouse was stretched over the floor, and much was the gilt gear that gleamed upon it. The brave man stepped thereon and handled the steel, clad in a doublet of costly Tars, and afterwards a well wrought hood, closed on top and bound within with a glistening white fur. Then they put the sabatons[1] upon the hero's feet, lapped his legs in steel with fair greaves, to which were attached well polished poleynes[2] fastened about his knees with knots of gold. Fine cuisses then, that well enclosed his thick, brawny thighs, they attached with thongs. Next the decorated burnie[3] of bright steel rings upon precious stuff encased the hero, and well burnished braces upon his two arms, with elbow-pieces goodly and gay and gloves of plate, and all the goodly gear that might avail him at that time, with rich coat armour, gold spurs well fastened, and a sure brand girt about his side by a silken sash.

5. When he was hasped in arms his harness was rich; the least latchet or loop gleamed with gold. So, harnessed as he was, he heard his mass, offered and adored at the high altar. Then he came to the king and his court; courteously took his leave of lords and ladies; and they kissed him, and convoyed him, entrusting him to Christ. By that time was Gringolet ready, and girt with a saddle that gleamed full gaily with many gold fringes; everywhere nailed anew, prepared for that emergency. The bridle, barred about, was bound with bright gold; the decoration of the breastplate and of the fine housings, the crupper and caparison, accorded with the saddle-bow, and all was adorned with rich red gold nails, that glittered and gleamed like the gleam of the sun. Then he took the helm and quickly kissed it. It was stoutly stapled and stuffed within; it was high on his head, hasped behind, with a light urison[4] over the ventail,[5] embroidered and bound with the best gems on a broad silken border; and birds on the seams like painted popinjays[6] preening themselves here and there; turtle-doves and true-loves[7] thickly interlaced. As many birds there were as had been in town for seven winters. The circlet that surrounded his crown was even more precious — a device of gleaming diamonds.

6. Then they showed him the shield, that was of sheer gules, with the pentangle painted in pure gold. He took it by the baldric and cast it about his neck; and it became the hero passing fair. And why the pentangle pertains to that noble prince I mean to tell you, though it should delay me. It is a sign that Solomon set formerly as a token of truth, by its own right, for it is a figure that holds five points, and each line overlaps and locks in another; and throughout it is endless; and the English call it everywhere, as I hear, the endless knot. Therefore it suits this knight and his clear arms, forever faithful in five things, and in each of them five ways. Gawain was known for good and as refined gold, devoid of every villainy, adorned with virtues. Therefore, the new[8] pentangle he bore on shield and coat, as the man most true of speech and the knight gentlest of behaviour.

7. First, he was found faultless in his five wits; and again the hero failed never in his five fingers; and all his affiance in this world was in the five wounds that Christ received on the cross, as the creed tells; and wheresoever this man was hard bestead in the mêlée his pious thought was in this above all other things — to take all his strength from the five joys that the courteous Queen of Heaven had of her child. For this cause the knight had her image comely painted in the greater half of his shield, that when he looked down thereupon, his courage never abated. The fifth five that I find that the hero used, were generosity and fellowship above all things, his purity and his courtesy that never swerved, and pity that passes all qualities. These very five were more surely set upon that warrior than upon any other. Now all these[9] were established fivefold in this knight, and each one was fastened in another that had no end, and they were fastened on five points that never failed, nor met anywhere, nor sundered

[1] steel shoes. [2] knee pieces. [3] coat of mail. [4] scarf. [5] visor.

[6] parrots. [7] true lover's knots. [8] Should it be *now*? [9] These five larger virtues.

either, but finished always without end at each corner, wherever the game began or concluded. Therefore on his fair shield this knot was painted royally with red gold upon red gules. That is the true pentangle as the people properly call it. Now was the gay Gawain armed. He caught up his lance right there, and with a good-day he went for evermore.

8. He spurred his steed with the spurs and sprang on his way so swiftly that the stone struck out fire after him. All who saw the gentle man sighed in heart, and the heroes said all together to each other in their love for that comely knight, "By Christ, it is a shame that thou, hero, must be lost, who art so noble of life. In faith it is not easy to find his match upon the earth. To have acted more warily would have been better counsel; and to have made yon dear one a duke; it would well become him to be a brilliant leader of people here. This would have been better than to have him utterly destroyed, given over[1] to an elvish man for mere boasting pride. Who ever knew any king to take such counsel as to suffer knights to be so tricked for a Christmas game." Much warm water welled from eyes when that seemly sire departed from the dwellings that day. He made no stop, but wightly went his way; many a tiresome path he rode, as I heard the book tell.

9. Now rides this hero, Sir Gawain, through the realm of Logres in God's behalf, though to him it seemed no play. Oft alone companionless he lodged at night in places where he found not before him the fare that he liked. No company had he but his foal by friths and downs, nor nobody but God to talk with by the way; till that he approached nigh unto North Wales. He kept all the isles of Anglesey on the left side, and fared over the fords by the forelands, over at the Holy Head, till he again took land in the wilderness of Wirrel. There dwelt but few that loved either God or man with good heart. And ever as he fared he asked of men that he met if they had heard any talk of a green knight of the green chapel in any spot thereabout, and all nicked him with nay, that never in their life saw they any man of such green hue. The knight took strange roads by many a rough bank. His cheer changed full oft ere he saw that chapel.

[1] The meaning of the verb is doubtful.

10. Many a cliff he overclimbed in strange countries; far sundered from his friends, lonely he rode. At each ford or water where the hero passed it were strange if he found not a foe before him, and that so foul and so fell that it behooved him to fight. So many marvels in the mountains there the man found that it were too tedious to tell of the tenth part. Sometimes he warred with serpents, and with wolves also, sometimes with savages that dwelt in the cliffs; both with bulls and bears, and boars sometimes; and giants that assailed him from the high fell. Had he not been doughty and stern, and served God, doubtless he had been dead and slain full oft. But the warfare tried him not so much but that the winter was worse, when the cold clear water shed from the clouds, and froze ere it might fall to the barren earth. Near slain with the sleet he slept in his iron more nights than enough on naked rocks, where clattering from the crest the cold burn ran, and hung high over his head in hard icicles. Thus in peril and pain and plights full hard through the country wanders this knight all alone till Christmas Eve. At that tide to Mary he made his moan that she might direct his riding and lead him to some dwelling.

11. Merrily on the morn he rides by a mount into a forest full deep, that was strangely wild. High hills were on each side, and woods beneath of hoar oaks full huge, a hundred together. The hazel and the hawthorn were twined all together, covered everywhere with rough ragged moss, with many unblithe birds upon bare twigs that piteously piped there for pain of the cold. The knight upon Gringolet rides all alone under the boughs, through many a moss and mire, mourning for his trials, lest he should never survive to see the service of that Sire who on that very night was born of a lady to quell our pain. And therefore sighing he said: "I beseech thee, Lord, and Mary, that is mildest mother so dear, for some harbour where I might properly hear mass and thy matins tomorrow. Meekly I ask it, and thereto earnestly I pray my pater and ave and creed." He rode in his prayer and lamented for his misdeeds. Oft-times he blessed himself, and said, "Christ's cross speed me."

12. The hero had not crossed himself more than thrice ere he was aware in the

wood of a dwelling on a hill, above a clearing, on a mount, hidden under the boughs of many a huge tree about the ditches; a castle the comeliest that ever knight owned, set on a prairie, a park all about, with its beautiful palace, pinnacled full thick, and surrounded with many a tree for more than two miles. The hero gazed at the castle on that one side as it shimmered and shone through the fair oaks. Then he humbly doffed his helm and devoutly he thanked Jesus and St. Julian — who are both gentle — who courteously had directed him and harkened to his cry. "Now bon hostel," quoth the man, "I beseech you yet!" Then he spurs Gringolet with his gilt heels, and he full fortunately takes the way to the chief road, that soon brought the hero to the bridge-end in haste. The bridge was securely lifted, the gates locked fast; the walls were well arrayed; no wind blast did it fear.

13. The hero that sat on his horse, abode on the bank of the deep double ditch that stretched to the place. The wall sank in the water wondrous deep, and again a full huge height it towered aloft, of hard hewn stone up to the top courses, corbelled under the battlement in the best manner; and above fine watch-towers ranged along, with many good loop-holes that showed full clean. A better barbican that hero never looked upon. And farther within he beheld the high hall, with towers set full thickly about, and fair and wondrous high filioles with carved tops cunningly devised. Chalk-white chimneys enough he saw that gleamed full white on the battlements. So many painted pinnacles were set everywhere, built so thick among the crenellations of the castle, that it verily appeared cut out of paper. Fair enough it seemed to the noble knight on his horse if he could only attain the shelter within, to harbour in that hostel, while the holiday lasted. He called, and soon there appeared on the wall a right pleasant porter who took his message and greeted the knight errant.

14. "Good sir," quoth Gawain, "would you go my errand to the high lord of this house to crave harbour?"

"Yea, by Peter," quoth the porter; "and truly I trow that ye are welcome, sir, to dwell while you like."

Then the man went again quickly, and a crowd of folk with him, to receive the knight. They let down the great draw and eagerly poured out, and kneeled down on their knees upon the cold earth to welcome the hero as it seemed to them proper. They opened up wide the broad gate for him and he raised them courteously, and rode over the bridge. Several attendants held his saddle while he alighted, and afterwards good men enough stabled his steed. Then knights and squires came down to bring this hero joyfully into the hall. When he lifted up his helm people enough hurried to take it at his hand, in order to serve the courteous one; his sword and his shield they took too. Then he greeted full courteously the knights each one; and many a proud man pressed there to honour that prince. All hasped in his high weeds, they led him to the hall, where a fair fire burned fiercely upon the hearth. Then the lord of the people came from his chamber to meet courteously the man on the floor. He said, "Ye are welcome to wield as you like what is here; all is your own to have at your will and commandment." "Gramercy," quoth Gawain. "Christ reward you for it." Like glad heroes either folded the other in his arms.

15. Gawain looked on the man who greeted him so goodly, and thought it a bold hero that owned the castle, a huge warrior for the nonce, and of great age. Broad and bright was his beard, and all beaver-hued. Firm-gaited was he on his stalwart limbs; with a face as fierce as fire, and a free speech; and to the hero he seemed well suited indeed to govern a nation of good people.

The lord turned to a chamber and promptly commanded to give Gawain a retinue to serve him in lowly wise; and there were ready at his bidding men enough, who brought him to a bright bower where the bedding was curtains of pure silk with clear gold hems, and covertures right curious with comely borders, adorned above with bright fur. Curtains running on ropes, red gold rings, tapestries of Toulouse and Tars hung on the wall, and under foot on the floor of the same pattern. There with mirthful speeches the hero was despoiled of his burnie and of his bright weeds. Quickly men brought him rich robes that he might pick and choose the best for his change. As soon as he took one and was wrapped therein, that sat upon him seemly with sailing skirts, the hero by his visage verily seemed to well

nigh every man in looks glowing and lovely in all his limbs; it seemed to them that Christ never made a comelier knight. Wherever in the world he were, it seemed as if he might be a prince without peer in the field where fell men fight.

16. A chair before the chimney,[1] where charcoal burned, was prepared for Sir Gawain richly with cloths and cushions, upon counterpanes that were both fine. And then a beauteous mantle was cast on the man, of a brown fabric richly embroidered, and fairly furred within with the best skins, all of ermine; the hood of the same. And he sat on that settle in seemly rich attire, and warmed him thoroughly; and then his cheer mended. Soon a table was raised up on trestles full fair, and set with a clean cloth that showed clear white, napkins, salt-cellar, and silver spoons. The hero washed when he would and went to his meat. Men served him seemly enough, — double fold as was proper — with pottages various and suitable, seasoned in the best manner; and many kinds of fish, some baked in bread, some broiled on the coals, some boiled, some in sauces savoured with spices; and always discourse so pleasant that it pleased the warrior. Full freely and often the hero called it a feast right courteously, when all the retainers together praised him as courteous.[2] "Do this penance now, and soon things will be better!" Right mirthful was he for the wine that went to his head.

17. Then they questioned and inquired sparingly in skilful queries put to the prince himself, till he courteously acknowledged that he was of the court which noble Arthur holds alone, who is the rich, royal king of the Round Table; and that it was Gawain himself that sits in the house, by chance come for that Christmas. When the lord had learned that he had that hero, he laughed aloud, so dear it seemed to him; and all the men in the castle made much joy at appearing promptly in the presence of him who contains in his own person all worth and prowess and gracious traits, and is ever praised; above all the men in the world his renown is the greatest. Each warrior said full softly to his companion — "Now shall we see courteous turns of behaviour, and the blameless forms of noble talking; what profit there is in speech may we learn without asking since we have taken that fine father of nurture. God has indeed given us his grace, who grants us to have such a guest as Gawain, on account of whose birth men sit and sing for joy. This hero will now teach us what distinguished manners are; I think that those who hear him will learn how to make love."

18. When the dinner was done and the dear ones risen, the time was nigh arrived at the night. Chaplains took their way to the chapels, and rang full loudly, as they should, to the melodious evensong of the high time. The lord turns thither, and the lady also. Into a comely closet daintily she enters. Gawain joyfully proceeds, and goes thither straightway. The lord takes him by the mantle and leads him to his seat, recognizes him openly and calls him by his name, and says he is the welcomest wight in the world. And Gawain thanked him thoroughly and either embraced the other, and they sat soberly together during the service. Then the lady desired to look on the knight, and came from her closet with many fair maidens. But she was fairer than all the others in flesh and face, in skin and form, in complexion and demeanour — more beautiful than Guinevere, it seemed to the hero. He walked through the chancel to greet that gracious one. Another lady led her by the left hand, that was older than she; an ancient lady it seemed, and one highly honoured by the knights about her; but unlike to look on were the ladies, for if the younger was fair, yellow was the other. Rich red on the one bloomed everywhere; rough wrinkled cheeks rolled on the other. The kerchiefs of the one broidered with many clear pearls, openly displayed her breast and her bright throat, which shone clearer than snow that falls on the hills. The other covered her neck with a gorget, that wrapped her black chin in milk-white pleats. Her forehead was completely enveloped in silken folds, adorned and tricked [3] with small ornaments;

[1] In the old meaning of fireplace, fire-back, or grate.

[2] Possibly the host, and not Gawain, is the subject of this sentence, which then might be translated: "Full freely and oft the host called it a feast (i.e. made the feaster welcome) right courteously, when all the retainers praised him (Gawain or the host?) as courteous." In the next two sentences the host is pretty certainly the subject. With this interpretation cf. *Macbeth*, III, 4, 33: "The feast is sold that is not often vouch'd, while 't is a-making, 't is given with welcome."

[3] The precise, but not the general, meaning of the two participles is uncertain.

and naught was bare of that lady but the black brows, the two eyes, the nose, and the naked lips; and those were ugly to behold and oddly bleared. A gracious lady in the land one might call her forsooth! Her body was short and thick, her hips round[1] and broad. More pleasant to look on was the being she led.

19. When Gawain looked on that beauteous one who gazed graciously, he took leave of the lord, and went toward them. The elder he saluted, bowing full low; the lovelier he took a little in his arms; he kissed her comely, and knightly he greeted her. They welcomed him, and he quickly asked to be their servant if it pleased them. They took him between them and led him conversing to the fireplace in the parlour; and straightway they called for spices, which men speeded to bring them unsparingly, and the pleasant wine therewith each time. The lord leaped merrily up full often, and saw to it that the mirth never faltered. Gaily he snatched off his hood and hung it on a spear, and exhorted them to win it as a prize — he to have it[2] who could make the most mirth that Christmas tide. "And I shall try, by my faith, with the help of my friends[3] to compete with the best, ere I lose my apparel." Thus with laughing mien the lord makes merry in order to glad Sir Gawain with games in the hall that night. When it came time, the king commanded lights; Sir Gawain took his leave and went to his bed.

20. On the morn when as every man knows God was born to die for us, joy waxes in every dwelling in the world for his sake. So it did there on that day, with many dainties at meats and meals, right quaint dishes, and brave men on the dais dressed in their best. The old ancient wife sits the highest, the courteous lord placed by her, as I trow; Gawain and the gay lady together just in the middle, as the courses[4] properly come; and afterwards the rest throughout all the hall, as it seemed best to them, each man in his degree was properly served. There was meat, there was mirth, there was much joy, that it were arduous for me to tell thereof, though to note it I took pains belike.[5] But yet I know that Gawain and the lovely lady took comfort in each other's company, in the choice play of their sharp wits, and the pure courtesy of their modest talk; their disport surpassed indeed that of any royal game. Trumps and drums came playing loudly; each man minded his own business, and they two minded theirs.

21. Much delight was taken there that day, and the second; and the third followed as pleasantly. The joy of St. John's day was gentle to hear of; and it was the last of the festival, the people considered. There were guests to go upon the grey morn; therefore wondrous late they sat up and drank the wine, danced full gayly with sweet carols. At the last, when it was late, they took their leave, each good man to wend on his way. Gawain gave his host good day; but the good man takes him, and leads him to his own chamber, by the fireplace; and there he draws him aside and properly thanks him for the great worship that he had granted him in honouring his house on that high tide, in embellishing his castle with his good cheer. "Indeed, sir, while I live I shall be the better that Gawain has been my guest at God's own feast."

"Gramercy, sir," quoth Gawain, "in good faith the merit is yours; all the honour is your own, — the high King reward you; and I am your man to work your behest in high and in low as I am bound by right."

The lord eagerly strives to hold the knight longer; but Gawain answers him that he can in no wise.

22. Then the hero asked of him full fairly what extraordinary deed had driven him at that dear time from the king's court, to go all alone so boldly, ere the holidays were wholly over.

"For sooth, sir," quoth the hero, "ye say but the truth; a high errand and a hasty had me from these dwellings; for I am summoned to such a place as I know not in the world whitherward to wend to find it. I would not for all the land in Logres fail to reach it on New Year's morn — so our Lord help me. Therefore, sir,

[1] The meaning of *bay* is doubtful.

[2] These four words supplied.

[3] This phrase may go with "lose," thus aggravating the joke.

[4] This word (*messe*) can refer to the courses (the food), or to the "mess" (the two persons eating together, i.e. using the same goblet, platter, etc.).

[5] The clause literally translated is insignificant; we expect something like "and yet I should fall for all my pains."

this request I require of you here, that ye tell me truly if ever ye heard tale of the green chapel, where in the world it stands, and of the knight green in colour that keeps it. There was established by statute an agreement between us that I should meet that man at that landmark if I could but survive. And of that same New Year there now lacks but little, and by God's Son I would gladlier look on that person — if God would let me — than wield any possession in the world. Therefore, indeed — by your good will — it behooves me to wend; I have now at my disposal barely three days; and I were as fain fall dead as fail of mine errand."

Then laughing quoth the lord, "Now it behooves thee to stay; for I shall direct you to that spot by the time's end — the green chapel upon the ground. Grieve you no more; for ye shall be in your bed, sir, at thine ease some days yet, and set out on the first of the year and come to that place at mid-morn, to do what you like. Stay till New Year's day; and rise and go then. One shall set you on your way; it is not two miles hence."

23. Then was Gawain full glad, and merrily he laughed; "Now I thank you especially for this above all other things; now that my quest is achieved, I shall dwell at your will, and do whatever else ye decide."

Then the sire seized him and set him beside him, and let the ladies be fetched to please them the better. Fair entertainment they had quietly among themselves; the lord in his jovial, friendly demeanor behaved as a man out of[1] his wits that knew not what he did. Then he spake to the knight, crying loud, "Ye have agreed to do the deed that I bid. Will ye hold this hest here at once?"

"Yea, sir, forsooth," said the true hero, "while I stay in your castle I shall be obedient to your hest."

"Since ye have travelled from afar," quoth the warrior, "and then have sat late with me, ye are not well nourished, I know, either with sustenance or with sleep. Ye shall linger in your loft and lie at your ease tomorrow till mass time; and go to meat when ye will with my wife, who shall sit with you and comfort you with her company till I return home; and I shall rise early and go hunting." Gawain grants all this, bowing courteously.

24. "Yet further," quoth the hero, "let us make an agreement. Whatsoever I win in the wood, it shall be yours; and whatsoever fortune ye achieve, exchange with me therefor. Sweet sir, swap we so, swear truly, whichever one of us gets the worse or the better."

"By God," quoth Gawain the good, "I consent thereto; and whatever game you like, agreeable it seems to me."

"On this beverage just brought the bargain is made," said the lord of that people; and both laughed.

Then they drank and played and amused[2] themselves, these lords and ladies, so long as it pleased them; and then with polite demeanour and many fair gestures, they stood up and lingered a while, and talked quietly, kissed full comely, and took their leave. With many a gay servant and gleaming torches each hero was brought to his bed full softly at the last. Yet before they went to bed they oft rehearsed the covenants. The old lord of that people knew well how to keep up a jest.

FYTTE THE THIRD

1. Full early before the day the folk arose; the guests that would go called their grooms, and these hastened to saddle the horses, arrange their gear, and truss their mails. The great ones arrayed themselves to ride, leaped up lightly and caught their bridles, each wight on his way where it well pleased him.

The dear lord of the land was not the last; arrayed for the riding, with retainers full many, he ate a sop[3] hastily after he had heard mass, and took his way quickly with his bugle to the field. By the time that any daylight gleamed upon earth, he with his heroes were mounted on their high horses. Then these hunters that understood it, coupled their hounds, unclosed the kennel doors and called them thereout, blew blithely on bugles three simple calls. At this the brachets[4] bayed and made a wild noise, and the hunters chastised and turned

[1] *Wolde* in the text is translated as a corruption of some such word as "was lacking," or "wandered."

[2] Word doubtful. [3] Took a light repast.
[4] Hounds that hunt by scent.

back those that wandered off, — a hundred hunters of the best there were, as I have heard tell. To their stations the trackers went; hunters cast off the couples; and then arose for the good blasts great uproar in that forest.

2. At the first noise of the quest the game quaked; the deer moved down into the dale, dazed for dread; hurried to the height; but quickly they were hindered by the beaters, who cried stoutly. They let the harts with the high heads go their way, the wild bucks also with their broad palms,[1] for the generous lord had forbidden that there should any man meddle with the male deer in the close season. But the hinds were held back with "Hay!" and "Ho!" and the does driven with great din to the deep glades. There might one see as they ran the flight of arrows; at each turn under the boughs out flew a shaft, that savagely bit on the brown hide with full broad heads. How they leaped and bled and died by the banks! And ever the hounds with a rush eagerly followed them; hunters with shrill horn hastened after with such a resounding cry as if cliffs had cracked. What game escaped the men who shot was all run down and torn at the stands. The deer[2] were pestered at the heights, and worried at the waters; the people were so alert at the low stations, and the greyhounds so great, that got them quickly and pulled them down as fast as a man could see. The lord, shouting for joy, shot and alighted full oft, and passed the day thus with joy till the dark night.

3. So this lord sports by the eaves of the linden wood, and Gawain the good man lies in his gay bed; reposes till the day light gleams on the walls, under the beautiful coverlets, curtained about. And as he fell into a doze, faintly he heard a little din at the door, then distinctly;[3] and he heaved up his head out of the clothes, caught up a corner of his curtain a little, and watched warily in that direction to see what it might be. It was the lady, loveliest to behold, who drew the door to after her right slyly and quietly, and turned toward the bed. The hero grew bashful and laid himself down cunningly and pretended that he slept. And she stepped quietly, and stole to his bed, cast up the curtain, and crept within, and seated herself full softly on the bedside, and stayed there surprisingly long, to see when he should awake. The man lay pretending a full great while, bothered in his conscience what this affair might mean or amount to. Marvellous it seemed to him. But yet he said to himself, "More seemly would it be to find out by asking what she would." Then he waked, and stretched, and turned to her; unlocked his eyelids, and made believe he was amazed, and crossed himself with his hand, to be the safer for his prayer. With chin and cheek full sweet, of mingled white and red, right lovely she looked, with her small laughing lips.

4. "Good morrow, Sir Gawain!" said that fair lady. "Ye are a careless sleeper when one can enter thus. Now ye are certainly taken; unless we can make a truce I shall bind you in your bed, ye may be sure of that!" All laughing the lady shot those jests.

"Good morrow, fair one," quoth Gawain the blithe. "I shall be at your disposal, and that pleases me well, for I yield me outright and pray for grace, — and that is the best course, I judge, for I am in straits." And thus he returned the jests with many a blithe laugh. "But would ye, lovely lady, grant me leave, free[4] your prisoner and bid him rise, I would leave this bed and dress myself better. Then I could talk with you in more comfort."

"Nay, forsooth, fair sir," said that sweet one, "ye shall not rise from your bed; I shall manage you better. I shall tie you up securely,[5] and afterwards talk with my knight that I have caught; for I ween well, ye are indeed Sir Gawain, whom all the world worships whereso ye ride. Your honour, your courtesy, is heartily praised, by lords, by ladies, by all alive; and now ye are here, forsooth, and we all alone. My lord and his people are gone far away; the other men in their beds, and my maidens also; the door shut and closed with a strong hasp; and since I have in this house him whom all like, I shall make good use of my time while it lasts. Ye are welcome to my person, to do whatever you wish; I am perforce, and must remain, your servant."

[1] The flat, broad part of the horn.
[2] Subject supplied.
[3] Meaning not quite sure.
[4] Meaning doubtful.
[5] A mere guess: the line appears to be literally "I shall cover you here the other half also."

5. "In good faith," quoth Gawain, "a great privilege it seems to me — though I be not now he that ye speak of. To reach such reverence as ye rehearse here, I am a man unworthy, I know well. By God, I should be glad — if it seemed good to you — to do what I might in speech or in service to enhance your worship;[1] — it were a pure joy."

"In good faith, Sir Gawain," quoth the gay lady, "if I should speak ill of the fame and the prowess that pleases all others, or esteem it light, it would show but small discernment.[2] But there are ladies enough who were liefer have this courteous one in their power — as I have thee here, — to dally dearly with your dainty words, to comfort themselves and dispel their cares, — than much of the treasure and gold that they have. But I praise the Lord who rules the skies that through his grace I have wholly in my hand that which all desire."

Great cheer she that was so fair of face made him; the knight with discreet speeches answered her every proposal.

6. "Madame," quoth the merry man, "Mary reward you, for in good faith I have found your generosity noble. People judge a person's deeds largely from the accounts of others;[3] but the praise that they accord my deserts is but idle. It is simply your own nobility, who know nothing but good."

"By Mary," quoth the gracious one, "methinks it is otherwise; for were I worth all the store of women alive, and all the wealth of the world were in my hands, and I should bargain and choose to get me a lord, then for the good traits that I have found in the knight here, of beauty and graciousness and gay seeming, and from what I have heard before and hold in this case to be true, there should no hero in the world be chosen before you."

"Indeed, worthy one," quoth the hero, "ye might[4] have chosen much better; but I am proud of the estimation that ye put upon me; and as your devoted servant I hold you my sovereign, and your knight I become; and Christ pay you for it."

Thus they spoke of various things till past the midmorn; and ever the lady behaved as if she loved him much. But the hero fared with caution and made courteous pretences. "Though I were the fairest of women," mused the lady, "little love would he show, because of the danger that he seeks without reproach — the blow that may slay him, but must needs be undergone." The lady then asked leave, and he granted her full soon.

7. Then she gave him good day, and of a sudden laughed; and as she stood there she astonished him with right sharp words: "Now may he that speeds each speech, pay you for this entertainment; but that ye are Gawain, it goes not in my mind."[5]

"Wherefore?" quoth the hero; and eagerly he asks, afraid lest he had failed in the performance of his design.[6] But the lady blessed him and spake in this wise: "A man as good as Gawain is properly held — and courtesy is closed so entirely in him — could not easily have lingered so long with a lady but he had on some trifling excuse or other[7] courteously craved a kiss."

Then said Gawain, "Indeed, be it as you like; I shall kiss at your commandment as becomes a knight, and fear[8] lest he displease you; so urge that plea no more." She comes nearer at that and takes him in her arms; stoops graciously down and kisses the man. They courteously entrust each other to Christ. She goes forth at the door without more ado, and he prepares to rise, and hurries amain; calls to his chamberlain, chooses his weeds, steps forth blithely to mass when he is ready; and then he goes to his meat, behaving always courteously, and makes merry all day till the bright moon rises. Never was a hero fairer entertained by two such worthy dames, the older and the younger. Much disport they make together.

8. And ever the lord of the land is bound on his sport, to hunt in holts and heath at barren hinds. Such a sum of does and of other deer he slew there by the time the sun was low, that it were a marvel to estimate. Then eagerly they all flocked together at the last; and quickly of the slain deer they made a quarry. The leaders

[1] The passage is none too clear.
[2] The last clause is obscure in the text.
[3] The passage is obscure.
[4] "might" supplied.
[5] The negative is supplied.
[6] Possibly, "in some form of courtesy."
[7] Literally, "By some touch of some trifle at some tale's end."
[8] "Fear" is an emendation by Morris; the clause is obscure.

hastened thereto with men enough; gathered the greatest of grease,[1] and proceeded properly to undo[2] them as the occasion demands. Some that were there tried them at the assay[3] and found two fingers of fat on the leanest of all. Afterwards they slit the slot,[4] seized the arber,[5] cut it free with a sharp knife, and tied it[6] up. Next they cut down along the four limbs and rent off the hide; then they opened the belly, took out the paunch, cutting eagerly, and laid aside the knot.[7] They began at the throat again and skilfully divided the weasand from the windpipe and threw out the guts. Then they cut out the shoulders with their sharp knives, and pulled them through by a little hole, so as to have whole sides. Next they divided the breast, and cut it in two; and once more they began at the throat, split the beast quickly right up to the crotch, took out the advancers,[8] and immediately severed all the fillets by the ribs, and took them off properly along the backbone even to the haunch, — all of which hung together. Then they heaved it up whole and cut it off there; and that they took for the numbles,[9] as it is rightly called. At the fork of the thighs they cut the flaps behind; hastily they hewed the carcass in two, and severed it along the backbone.

9. Both the head and the neck they hewed off then, and afterwards they sundered the sides swiftly from the chine, and the corbie's fee[10] they cast in a green tree. Then they pierced either thick side through by the rib, and hung them each by the hocks of the haunches — each man for his fee, as it befell him to have it. Upon a skin of a fair beast they fed their hounds with the liver and the lights, the leather of the paunches, and bread bathed in blood mingled thereamong. Loudly they blew the prize, and bayed their hounds; then they started to carry home their meat, blowing full stoutly many loud notes. By the time daylight was done the band had all arrived at the comely castle, where the knight is quietly waiting in comfort beside a bright fire. When the lord arrived and Gawain met him, there was joy enough.

10. Then the lord commanded to gather in the hall all the household, and both the ladies to come down with their maids. Before all the folk on the floor he bade men fetch his venison before him; and all in merry sport he called Gawain, told him the number of the choice beasts, and showed him the fat meat cut from[11] the ribs; "How like you this play? Have I won the prize? Have I properly earned thanks by my woodcraft?"

"Yes, indeed," quoth the other hero; "here is the fairest store that I saw this seven year in the season of winter."

"And all I give you, Gawain," quoth the host, then; "for by our plighted covenant you can claim it as your own."

"That is true," replied the hero, "and I say to you the same; I too have won this worthy thing within doors; and I am sure that with quite as good will it belongs to you." He throws his arms about his fair neck and kisses him as courteously as he knew how. "Take you there my merchandise; I have won no more; though I should give it up willingly even if it were greater."

"It is good," quoth the good man; "gramercy therefor. Perchance it might be better if you would tell me where you won this same favour by your own[12] wit."

"That was not the agreement," said he; "ask me no more, for ye have got all that belongs to you, be sure of that."

They laughed and made merry in low tones; then they went quickly to supper with new dainties enough.

11. And afterwards as they sat by a fireplace in a chamber, servants poured to them oft the choice wine; and again in their jesting they agreed to make the same bargain on the morning that they made before, — whatsoever chance betide to exchange their winnings at night when they met, whatsoever new they win. They made this agreement before all the court, and the beverage was brought forth merrily at that time.[13] Then at length they politely took leave; and everybody hurried to bed.

[1] The correct hunting term for "the fattest."
[2] Cut up.
[3] Probably at the side of the neck, or on the brisket.
[4] Probably at the hollow of the breast bone.
[5] The gullet probably.
[6] The *schyre* is presumably the "arber"; though in l. 2256 it appears to be the skin of the neck or nape.
[7] i.e. the entrails, with the gullet knotted to prevent the filth from escaping.
[8] This titbit is sometimes called a part of the numbles.
[9] A choice cut; hence, capriciously, our humble-pie.
[10] A bit of the offal for the crows.
[11] Literally "upon."
[12] Possessive uncertain.
[13] A drink ratifies the agreement — as before.

When the cock had crowed and cackled but thrice, the lord had leaped from his bed; likewise his followers each one, so that the meat and the mass were promptly despatched, and the troop ready for the chase in the wood ere any day sprang. With hunters and horns they passed through the plains, and uncoupled the racing hounds among the thorns.

12. Soon they heard the cry of the dogs by a marsh side. The huntsman encouraged the hounds that first caught the scent, hurled sharp words at them with a great noise. The hounds that heard it hastened thither quickly, and fell immediately to the scent, forty at once. Then there rose such a resounding cry of gathered hounds that the rocks about rang. The hunters cheered them with horn and with mouth; then all together they swung in a troop between a pool in that wood and a wild crag. On a hill, beside a cliff at the side of the bog, where the rough rock was rudely fallen, they fared to the finding, and the hunters after them. The men surrounded both the rock and the hill, because they knew well that he was within them, — the beast that the bloodhounds were proclaiming there. Then they beat on the bushes and bade him rise up, and he savagely rushed out athwart the men, the most formidable of swine. Long since had he left the herd on account of his age, for he was a huge beast, the greatest of boars. His grinders when he grunted grieved many, for at his first burst he thrust three to the earth, and sped hastily forth at great speed without respite. And they hallooed "High!" full loudly, and cried "Hay, hay!" With horns to mouth lustily they blew the recheat.[1] Many were the merry cries of men and of hounds that hastened after this boar with hue and cry to kill him. Full oft he bides at bay, and maims the pack in the mêlée. He hurts many of the hounds and grievously they howl and yell.

13. The hunters pushed forward then to shoot at him, aimed at him with their arrows and hit him often. But the shafts that struck on his shields,[2] give way at the pith, and the barbs would not bite on his brawn though the shaven shafts shivered in pieces; the head hopped out again wheresoever it hit. But when the dints of their keen strokes scared him, then mad for destruction he rushed on the men, did them sore hurt where he hurled forth, and many a one grew wary thereat and gave back a little. But the lord on a light horse hurries after him, blowing his bugle like a bold hero. He winds the recheat as he rides through thick groves, following this wild swine till the sun declined. Thus they drive on the day with such doings while our lovely hero lies comfortably in his bed at home in clothes full rich of hue. The lady did not forget; she came to greet him; full early she was by him to change his mind.

14. She comes to the curtain and peeps at the knight. Sir Gawain at once welcomes her worthily, and she returns his greeting right promptly, seats herself softly by his side, laughs openly, and with a lovely look addresses these words to him: "Sir, if ye be Gawain, it seems to me a very strange thing that a man of such quality should not follow the conventions of good society; and should after making acquaintance with a person cast him utterly from his mind. Thou hast already forgotten what I taught you yesterday in the best language that I knew."

"What is that?" quoth the hero. "Forsooth I know not. If what ye say be true, I am to blame."

"Yet I taught you about kissing," replied the fair lady; "wherever a countenance is known, quickly to claim a kiss; that becomes every knight who practices courtesy."

"Cease such speech, my dear lady," said the ready man. "I durst not claim it lest I should be denied. If I proposed and were refused, I should certainly be wrong in proffering."

"By my faith," quoth the lovely dame, "ye cannot be refused. Ye are strong enough to compel it by strength if ye pleased, supposing any were so ill-bred as to deny you."

"Yea, by God," said Gawain, "your speech is good; but violence is considered discourteous among my people, as is any gift that is not given with a good will. I am at your command to kiss when ye like. Ye may begin when ye please, and leave off whenever it likes you."

The lady stoops down and gracefully

[1] A call for collecting the hounds.
[2] The tough skin of the flanks.

kisses his face. They converse long of the fears and joys of love.

15. "I should like to know from you, sir," said the peerless lady, "if it vexes you not, — what might be the reason that so young and so gallant person as ye now are, one so courteous and so knightly as ye are known everywhere to be, *have never spoken of love.*[1] For in relating the pains of true knights, the chief thing praised in all of chivalry is the royal sport of love, — and the science of arms: it is the title, token, and text of their works; how heroes for their true love adventured their lives, endured for their sweethearts doleful hours, and afterwards avenged themselves by their valour; dispersed their care, and brought bliss to bower, with plenteous rewards for themselves. And ye are the most renowned knight of your time; your fame and your worship walks everywhere, — and now I have sat by you here two separate times, yet have I never heard from your head a single word that pertained at all to love, less or more. And ye, that are so courteous and so distinguished in your vows, ought willingly to show and teach to a young thing some tokens of the art of true love. Why are ye so rude who are so praised? Is it that ye deem me too dull to hearken to your dalliance? For shame! I came hither all alone to sit and learn from you some accomplishment: do teach me part of your skill while my lord is from home."

16. "In good faith," quoth Gawain, "God reward you! Great is the entertainment, and huge the pleasure to me, that so worthy a one as ye should come hither, and take pains with so poor a man, and play with your knight in any wise; it delights me. But to take upon myself the task of expounding true love, of touching upon the themes of that text, and tales of arms before you, who I wot well have more knowledge of that sort by the half than I or a hundred such have, or ever shall have so long as I live, — that were a manifold folly by my troth, dear one. But I would work your will with all my might, highly beholden to you as I am; and I wish evermore to be your servant, so God save me."

Thus the fair lady besought him, and tried him oft, for to have won him to wrong, — whatever it was she purposed; but he defended himself so fairly that no fault appeared, nor any evil on either side; they knew nought but joy. They laughed and played a long time, till at last she kissed him, took her leave fairly, and went her way.

17. Then the hero bestirred himself and rose to the mass; and afterwards their dinner was dight and splendidly served. The hero sported with the ladies all day, but the lord raced over the land full oft, following his uncouth swine, that rushed along the banks and bit in sunder the backs of his best brachets.[2] There he abode at his bay till bowmen broke it, and maugre his head made him move forth. Many fell arrows there flew when the folk gathered about, but yet at times he made the stoutest to start; till at the last he was so weary he could no more run; but with the haste that he might he won to a hole in a cleft by a rock, where the burn runs. He got the bank at his back and began to scrape; the ugly froth foamed from the corners of his mouth, and he whet his white tusks. It was not pleasant for all the bold hunters that stood about him to approach him even remotely; and to go nigh him durst none for fear of harm. He had hurt so many before, that all seemed then full loath to be more torn with the tusks of that savage and crazed beast.

18. When the knight came himself, reining his steed, and saw him bide at the bay near his men, he lighted nimbly down, left his courser, pulled out a bright brand and boldly strode forth, and hurried fast through the stream where the fell one abode. The wild creature was ware of the wight with weapon in hand, and heaved on high his hairs; so fiercely he snorted that many feared for their lord lest to him befell the worse. The swine rushed directly upon the hero, so that man and boar were both in a heap in the wildest of the water; but the boar had the worse, for the man marked him well as they first met and skilfully set his point exactly in the slot,[3] pierced him up to the hilt so that his heart split, and he gave way squealing and went quickly down the water. A hundred hounds seized him and fiercely bit on him. Men

[1] The words in italics are rashly supplied by the translator. For several lines here the construction is unclear.

[2] hounds. [3] The proper piercing spot in the chest.

brought him to land and the dogs finished him.[1]

19. There was blowing of the prize[2] on many a loud horn, high halloing aloft by mighty hunters; brachets bayed the beast as the masters bade who were the chief huntsmen of that swift chase. Then a wight that was wise in woodcraft begins skilfully to unlace[3] this boar. First he hews off its head and sets it on high; and afterwards splits him all down his rough back, and takes out the bowels and singes them on the coals; then with bread mingled with these, he rewards his hounds. Afterwards he cuts the brawn in fine broad shields, and has out the hastlets[4] in the proper manner. And now they bind the halves all whole together, and afterwards stoutly hang them on a stiff staff. Now with this same swine they take their way home. The boar's head was borne before the warrior who slew him at the stream through the force of his own strong hand. It seemed long to him until he saw Sir Gawain in the hall; then he called, and Gawain came promptly to take his fees there.

20. The lord jested[5] full loudly, and merrily he laughed when he saw Sir Gawain; with pleasure he spoke. The good ladies were called and the household gathered. He showed them the shields and told them the tale of the girth[6] and length of the wild swine; and also of his viciousness in the wood where he fled. That other knight full comely commended his deeds, and praised it as a great bag that he had made; for such a brawn of a beast, the bold man said, nor such sides of a swine, saw he never before. Then they handled the huge head; the courteous man praised it and made much of it to honour the lord.

"Now Gawain," quoth the good man, "this game is your own, by fine and fast foreword, truly ye know."

"It is sooth," quoth the hero; "and as truely all my getting I shall give you in turn, by my troth." He took the warrior about the neck and courteously kissed him, and another time he served him the same.

"Now we are even," quoth the warrior, "tonight of all the covenants that we knit by law since I came hither."

Said the lord, "By St. Giles, ye are the best that I know! Ye will be rich in a short time, if ye drive such chaffer!"

21. Then they raised tables aloft on trestles, and cast cloths upon them. The clear light then appeared along the walls, as men set and distributed waxen torches all about the hall. Much mirth and glee rose up therein, about the fire on the hearth, and in various wise at the supper and after. Many noble songs they sang, as Christmas carols and new dance tunes, with all the mannerly mirth that a man can tell of. And ever our lovely knight sat beside the lady. Such seemly cheer she made to the hero, sought with such sly stolen[7] glances to please the stalwart one, that the wight was all amazed, and wroth with himself. But he would not on account of his breeding reprove her, but responded in all courtesy, howsoever outrageous she might be. When they had played in the hall as long as their will lasted, the lord called to bedwards, and to the room with a fireplace they passed.

22. And there they drank and talked, and the lord proposed again to make the same arrangement for New Year's Eve. But the knight craved leave to depart on the morn, for it was nigh at the term that he must keep. The lord hindered him from that, persuaded him to linger, and said, "As I am true man, I pledge my troth thou shalt reach the green chapel to do thy tasks, sir, by New Year's light, long before prime. Therefore lie in thy loft and take thine ease; and I shall hunt in this holt and keep the covenant — change merchandise with thee when I return hither; for I have tried thee twice, and faithful I find thee; now, 'third time, best time.'[8] Think on the morrow. Make we merry while we may, and be joyful; for a man can catch trouble whensoever he likes."

This was readily granted and Gawain stayed. Drink was quickly brought to them, and to bed they went with lights. Sir Gawain lay and slept full still and soft all night; the lord, mindful of his hunting, was dight full early.

[1] Present and past tense are oddly mixed in this stanza, as often in the poem. This time they have been normalized.
[2] The horn-blowing for the game's death.
[3] cut up. [4] cutlets.
[5] Two words not clear.
[6] Translating *largesse* as "largeness."
[7] A guess for *stollen*.
[8] The line is not clear; literally, perhaps, "third time, throw best."

23. After mass he and his men took a morsel. Merry was the morning. He asks for his mount, and all the sportsmen who should accompany him on horse were ready mounted on their steeds before the hall gates. Wondrous fair was the field, for the frost still lingered. The sun rose in a rack of ruddy red, and drove all the clouds from the welkin. The hunters uncoupled by a holt side, and the rocks in the forest rang for the noise of their horns. Some dogs fell on a scent where the fox had loitered; followed it oft obliquely[1] through the cunning of their wiles. A kennet[2] cried upon it; the huntsman encouraged him, and his fellows hastened after, panting thickly. They ran forth in a rabble on Reynard's very track, and he hurried before them. Soon they found him; and when they actually saw him they chased him fast, baying him full fiercely with a huge noise. And he trants[3] and turns through many a rough grove; doubles and hearkens by hedges full often. At the last by a little ditch he leaps over a spinny, and steals out full stilly by a rough rand.[4] Half escaped from the wood he turns with wiles from the hounds; but then he arrived, ere he knew it, at a chosen stand, where in an instant three stout hunters in gray threatened him at once. He blenched again quickly, and bravely started off; with all the woe in the world, he turned away to the wood.

24. Then was it a pure joy to listen to the hounds, when all the gathered mute[5] got view of him. The cry they set on his head at the sight was as if all the resounding cliffs had clattered down in a heap. Here he was halloed when the hunters met him, loudly cried upon with noisy calls; there he was threatened and often called thief; and ever the ticklers were at his tail so that he could not tarry. Oft he was run at when he raked out, and oft he reeled in again, so wily was Reynard. And ever he led the bespattered lord and his troop in this manner among the hills, now in them, now over, now under, while the courteous knight at home slept wholesomely within the comely curtains on the cold morn.

But the lady for love cared not to sleep nor to give up the purpose that bode in her heart; but up she rose quickly and took her way thither in a gay mantle meetly reaching to the earth, and furred full fine with skins of the best. No ornaments of gold on her head; but only the bright stones set about her tressour[6] in clusters of twenty. With her fair face and her lovely throat all naked, her breast bare before and behind too, she comes within the chamber door and closes it after her, throws up a window and calls on the wight, and smartly thus stirred him with her fair cheery words. "Ah man, how can you sleep, this morning is so clear!" Though he was drowsing deep, yet could he hear her.

25. In the dreary depths of a dream the noble was sunk, like a man suffering from many sad thoughts, how destiny should *dight him*[7] his weird at the green chapel that day when he met the man, and had to abide his buffet without more debate. But when he had fairly recovered his wits, he emerged from his dreams and answered with haste. The lovely lady came laughing sweetly, stooped over his fair face and courteously kissed him. He welcomed her worthily with choice cheer. To see her so glorious, and so gaily attired, so faultless of feature, and so lovely of colour, warmed his heart with welling joy. With smooth and gracious smiling they straightway waxed mirthful. All was bliss and good cheer that passed between them. They exchanged goodly words; much happiness they felt, and great was the peril between them, unless Mary thought of her knight.

26. For that beauteous princess constrained him so sorely, and the danger pressed him so nigh, that of necessity it behooved him either accept her love or rudely refuse it. He thought much of his courtesy, lest he should prove a clown; and more on his villainy if he should do sin, and be traitor to the hero who owned the castle. "God shield!" quoth the warrior, "that shall not befall!" With a little love-dalliance he laid aside all the pointed speeches that sprang from her mouth.

Quoth the lady to the hero: "Ye deserve blame if ye love not her who is so near you, — of all creatures in the world most wounded in heart; — unless indeed ye have a sweetheart, a dearer being, that pleases you better, and ye have plighted faith so

1 Word obscure. 2 small hound. 3 twists.
4 Unploughed strip by woodside. 5 pack.
6 headdress, caul.
7 Words in italics supplied by Morris.

firmly to that gentle one that ye care not to loosen it. — Verily now that is what I believe, and I pray you that you tell me truly; for all the loves in the world deny not the truth with guile."

"By St. John!" said the knight, and courteously he smiled, "I have none, and none will I have."

27. "That is the worst of all!" quoth the lady. "I am answered indeed, to my sorrow. Kiss me now comely and I shall go hence. I can only mourn in the world as a maid that loved much."

Sighing she stooped down and kissed him seemly; and then she severed from him, and said as she stood, "Now, dear, at this departing do me this comfort; give me somewhat of thy gift, thy glove if it might be, that I may think on thee, sir, to lessen my mourning."

"Now in truth," quoth that man, "I would I had here for thy love, the dearest thing that I wield; for truly ye have right oft in reason deserved a greater reward than I could reckon. But to exchange with you love-tokens, that would profit but little. It is not for your honor to have at this time a glove of Gawain's gift for a keepsake; and I am here on an errand in lands uncouth, and have no men with mails full of precious things for remembrances at this moment; and that mislikes me, lady. But every man must act according to his circumstances, and none should take it ill or repine."

"Now, courteous and honourable one," quoth that lovesome lady, "though I shall have nothing of yours, yet shall ye have of mine."

28. She reached him a rich ring of red gold work with a gleaming stone standing aloft, that shed blushing beams like the bright sun; know ye well it was worth wealth full huge. But the man refused it, and readily he said: "I desire no great gifts, my gay one, at this time. I have naught to give you, and naught will I take."

She offered it him full pressingly, and he refused her offer, and swore swiftly on his sooth that he would not take it. And she sorrowed that he refused, and said thereafter, "If ye refuse my ring, since it seems too rich, and ye would not be so highly beholden to me, I shall give you my girdle, that will enrich you less."

She lightly caught a lace that went about her sides, knit upon her kirtle under the bright mantle. It was adorned with green silk, and ornamented with gold, broidered all around, decked with fringes;[1] and that she offered to the hero, and gaily besought that, though it were unworthy, he would take it. And he denied that he would in any wise take either gold or present ere God sent him grace to achieve the chance that he had chosen there. "And therefore, I pray you, be not displeased, and give over your attempt; for I intend never to consent. I am dearly beholden to you because of your entertainment; and ever in hot and in cold I will be your true servant."

29. "Now refuse ye this silk," said the lady then, "because it is simple in itself, as it certainly seems to be? Lo! little it is, and less it is worth; but whoso knew the virtues that are knit therein, he would esteem it at a greater price peradventure; for whatsoever man is girt with this green lace, while he has it fittingly wrapped about him, there is no warrior under heaven than can wound him; for he could not be slain by any device in the world."

Then the knight paused, and it came to his heart that it would be a jewel for the peril that awaited him when he arrived at the chapel to undergo his ordeal. Could he manage to be unslain, that were a noble device. Then he indulged her entreaties and suffered her to speak; and she pressed the belt on him and offered it to him eagerly. And he accepted it, and she gave it him with a good will, and besought him for her sake never to discover it, but to conceal it loyally from her lord. The man agreed that never person should know it indeed but they twain. Full oft he thanked her, right glad in heart and thought. By that she had kissed the stout knight three times.

30. Then she takes her leave and leaves him there, for more entertainment she could not get from that man. When she was gone Sir Gawain bestirs himself, rises and dresses in noble array. He lays up the love-lace the lady had given him, hides it full cleverly where he can find it again. Then promptly he takes his way to the chapel; quietly approaches to the priest and prays him there

[1] Reading *frynges* for MS. *fyngres;* or we may keep the text and translate, "wrought, embroidered, by fingers."

that he would elevate his life, and teach him better how his soul should be saved when he should go hence. Then he shrives him cleanly and shows his misdeeds, both the more and the less, beseeches mercy, and begs for absolution. And the priest assoils him thoroughly and set him as clean as if doomsday had been due on the morrow. And afterwards Gawain makes more mirth among the fair ladies that day with comely carols and all kinds of joy than ever he did before, till the dark night. Everyone had pleasure of him there, and said indeed that he had never been so merry since he came hither.

31. Now let him linger in that place, where may love betide him. The lord is still in the field leading his men. He has overtaken this fox that he followed so long, as he sprinted over a spinny to spy the rascal, where he heard the hounds that hastened fast after him. Reynard came running through a rough grove, and all the rabble in a rout right at his heels. The man was ware of the game, and warily abode; pulled out his bright brand and struck at the beast; and he dodged from the sharp weapon and would have turned; but a dog seized him ere he could, and right before the horse's feet they all fell on him and worried this wily one with a great noise. The lord lighted quickly, and caught him forthwith; pulled him full hastily out of the dogs' mouths, and holding him high over his head, halloed fast; and there many fierce hounds bayed him. Hunters hied them thither with horns full many, ever blowing the recheat[1] till they saw the hero. As soon as his noble company was come, all that bare bugle blew at once, and all the others that had no horns halloed. It was the merriest mute[2] that ever men heard — the rich riot that there was raised for Reynard's soul. They rewarded the hounds there, stroked them and rubbed their heads; and afterwards they took Reynard and turned off his coat.

32. And then they hastened home, for it was nigh night, blowing full stoutly in their great horns. The lord alighted at last at his dear home, found fire on the floor, and the hero beside it, Sir Gawain the good, that glad was withal among the ladies; in their love he had much joy. He wore a mantle of blue that reached to the earth; his surcoat, that was softly furred, became him well; and his hood of the same hung on his shoulder. Trimmed all about with fine fur were both. He met this good man in the middle of the floor, and all joyfully he greeted him, and goodly he said: "Now I shall fulfill our covenant, that we have just made, where no drink was spared." Then he embraces the knight and kisses him thrice with as much gusto and as soberly as he could give them.

"By Christ!" quoth the other knight, "ye get much bliss in the profits of this business — if ye drive good bargains!"

"Of the bargain, no matter," quoth curtly that other, "so long as the debts that I owed are properly paid."

"Mary!" quoth the other man, "my offering is the worse, for I have hunted all this day, and naught have I got but this foul fox-fell; the fiend have the good ones! And that is full poor to pay for such fine things as ye have given me here, three such rare kisses."

"It is enough," quoth Sir Gawain; "I thank you, by the rood." And as they stood there the lord told him how the fox was slain.

33. With mirth and minstrelsy, with meats at their will, they made as merry as any men could. With laughing of ladies, with merry jests, Gawain and the good man were both as glad as if the court were mad, or else drunk. Both the man and his retinue made many jokes till the season arrived when they must sever; the men had to go to their beds at last. Then humbly this gentle man takes his leave of the lord first; and fairly he thanks him. "For such a joyous sojourn as I have had here, for the honor you have shown me at this high feast, the high king reward you! I can only give you myself to be one of your men, if that pleases you. For I must needs, as ye know, proceed, tomorrow, if ye will grant me some man to show, as you promised, the way to the green chapel, as God will suffer me to take on New Year's day the doom of my fate."

"In good faith," quoth the good man, "with a good will! All that ever I promised you, I will perform." Therewith he assigns a servant to set him in the way, and

[1] The note that recalls all the dogs.
[2] Noise of the whole band.

conduct him by the downs, that he should without hesitation travel through the forest and fare at the best in the woods. The lord thanked Gawain for the worship he had been willing to show him. Then the knight took his leave of the beautiful ladies.

34. With care and with kissing he speaks to them, and many earnest thanks he presses upon them. And they returned him the same again promptly; they entrusted him to Christ with sighings full sad. Afterwards he graciously departs from the household; each man that he met he thanked him for his service and his solace, and the various pains with which they had been busy to serve him. And each man was as sad to sever from him there as if they had ever dwelt worthily with that hero. Then with people and with light he was led to his chamber and blithely brought to bed to be at his rest. Whether he slept soundly I dare not say, for he had much to think of on the morrow if he would. Let him lie there; he was near what he sought. If ye will be still a while I shall tell you how they fared.

FYTTE THE FOURTH

1. Now nighs the New Year, and the night passes. The day drives on to the dark, as God bids; but outside wild storms wakened in the world; clouds cast the cold keenly to the earth; with discomfort enough to the naked, the snow from the north flew sharply, and nipped the game. The blustering wind blew from the heights, and drove each dale full of great drifts. The man who lay in his bed heard it right well; though he locks his lids, full little he sleeps. By each cock that crew he knew well the hour. Promptly he leaped up ere the day sprang, for there was the light of a lamp that gleamed in his chamber. He called to his chamberlain, who quickly answered him, and bade him bring his burnie and saddle his horse. The chamberlain gets up and fetches him his weeds, and arrays Sir Gawain in proper fashion. First he dressed him in his clothes to keep out the cold, and then he put on the rest of his harness, that had been well kept, both mail and plate, and brightly polished. The rings of his rich burnie had been rocked from the rust,[1] and all was fresh as at first; and Gawain was fain to give thanks for it. The attendant had wiped each piece well and often. Then the noblest man betwixt here and Greece bade his steed be brought.

[1] That is, in a barrel of sand.

2. Meanwhile, he threw upon himself his finest weeds; his surcoat with its cognisance of excellent work, virtuous stones set upon velvet, all wrought about and bound with embroidered seams, and fairly furred within with rare skins. Yet left he not the lace, the lady's gift, — that forgot not Gawain for his own good. When he had belted his brand upon his broad haunches, he dressed his love-token double about him, the knight swathed sweetly about his waist the girdle of green silk, which became him well, upon the royal red cloth that was fair to see. But this hero wore not the girdle for its wealth, for pride of the pendants, though they were polished, and though the glittering gold gleamed on the ends; but to save himself when it behoved him to suffer, to await his doom without resistance, with no brand or knife to defend him. By this the good man is ready and goes out quickly. Full often he thanks the distinguished company.

3. Gringolet the huge and strong was ready, who had been kept skilfully in the safest manner. The proud horse in his splendid condition longed for spurring. The hero approached him, noticed his coat, and said soberly, and by his sooth swore — "Here, in this castle, is a company that are mindful of courtesy. The man who maintains them, joy may he have; the dear lady, love betide her in this life, since they for charity cherish a guest and uphold honor in their hand. May the Being reward them who holds the heaven on high — and also you all. And if I might live any longer in the world I should give you some reward if I could." Then he stepped into stirrup and strode aloft. His servant offered him his shield; he put it on his shoulder. He spurred Gringolet with his gilt heels, and the steed jumped on the stone; no longer he stood still, but pranced. Gawain's servant, who bore his lance and helm, was by then on the horse. "This castle I entrust to Christ; may he give it aye good chance!"

4. The bridge was let down, and the broad gates unbarred and borne open on both sides. The hero crossed himself quickly and passed the boards, praised the porter, who

knelt before him giving good day and praying God that he save Gawain. And so he went on his way with his one man that should teach him how to find that dismal place where he should receive the rueful blow. They rode by banks where boughs are bare; they climbed by cliffs where the cold clings; the sky was upheld, but it was ugly beneath; mist hung on the moor and melted on the mount; each hill had a hat, a huge mist-cloak. Brooks boiled and broke from the banks about, shattering sheer on their shores where they showered down. Dreary was the way, where they should travel by the wood, till soon came the season when the sun rises at that time. They were on a hill full high, the white snow about them, when the man that rode beside him bade his master abide.

5. "I have brought you hither, sir, at this time; and now ye are not far from that famous spot that ye have asked and inquired so specially after. But I shall say to you forsooth, since I know you, and ye are a man that I love well, if ye would work by my wit ye should be the better for it. The place that ye press to is held full perilous. There dwells in that waste a wight the worst upon earth; for he is stiff and stern and loves to strike; and greater he is than any man in the world, and his body bigger than the four best that are in Arthur's house, and bigger than Hector or any other. He maintains that adventure at the green chapel. There passes by that place none so proud in arms but he dins him to death with dint of his hand. For he is a man without measure and uses no mercy; for be it churl or chaplain that rides by the chapel, monk or mass-priest, or any man else, he likes as well to kill him as to go alive himself. Therefore I tell ye as truly as ye sit in the saddle, come ye there ye shall be killed — trust me well — though ye had twenty lives to spend. He has dwelt here full long and caused much strife in the land. Against his sore dints ye cannot defend yourself.

6. "Therefore, good Sir Gawain, let the fellow alone, and go away some other road, for God's sake. Repair to some other country, where Christ may speed you; and I shall hie me home again, and promise you further — which I will swear by God and all his good saints, so help me God and the halidom and oaths enough — that I will loyally conceal you, and never tell tale that ever ye fled for any man that I know of."

"Gramercy," quoth Gawain. And sternly he added. "Well worth thee, man, who wishes my good; and I well believe thou wouldst loyally conceal me. But if thou kept promise never so faithfully, and I gave up here, sought for fear to fly as you advise, I were a knight coward; I could not be excused. But I will go to the chapel whatever chance may fall, and talk with that same man the tale that I like, be it good or evil, as it pleases fate to have it. Though he be a stern champion to cope with, and armed with a club, full well can God manage to save his servants."

7. "Mary!" quoth that other man, "now thou sayest as much as that thou wilt take upon thyself thine own destruction; if it pleases thee to lose thy life, I shall not let nor hinder thee. Have here thy helm on thy head, thy spear in thy hand; and ride down this same lane by yon rock-side till thou be brought to the bottom of the rugged valley; then look a little up the grassy slope on thy left hand, and thou shalt see in that ravine the chapel itself, and the burly man on the field who keeps it. Now farewell in God's name, Gawain the noble, for all the gold in the world I would not go with thee nor bear thee fellowship through this wood a foot further."

At that the man turned his bridle in the wood, hit the horse with the heels as hard as he could; leaped over the land, and left the knight there all alone.

"By God's self," quoth Gawain, "I will neither grieve nor groan. To God's will I am full obedient, and to him I have entrusted myself."

8. Then he spurs Gringolet and follows the path; pushes in by a hollow beside a thicket; rides through the rough slope right to the dale; and then he looked about him, and wild it seemed to him. He saw no sign of dwelling anywhere around, but on both sides high steep banks, and rough hunched crags with projecting stones; the shadows of the cliffs seemed to him terrible. Then he paused and held back his horse, and oft changed his cheer while seeking the chapel. He saw none such on any side, and strange it seemed to him. But soon, a little distance off on a grassy spot he descried a

mound as it were, a smooth hill by the bank of the stream near a ford of the flood that ran there. The burn bubbled there as if it were boiling. The knight urges his steed, and comes to the hill; lights nimbly down, and ties the rein and his rich bridle to a tree by a rough branch; then he turns to the hill and walks about it, debating with himself what it might be. It had a hole at the end and on either side, and was overgrown with grass in clumps everywhere, and was all hollow within — nothing but an old cave or a crevice of an old crag. He could not understand it at all. "Alas, Lord," quoth the gentle knight, "can this be the green chapel? Here about midnight the devil might tell his matins."

9. "Now," quoth Gawain, "it certainly is mysterious here; this oratory is ugly, overgrown with herbs. Well it beseems the wight clad in green here to do his devotions in the devil's wise. Now I feel in my five wits it is the fiend that has made this bargain with me, to destroy me here. This is a chapel of mischance; may ill fortune betide it! It is the cursedest kirk that ever I came in!"

With high helm on his head, his lance in his hand, he strides up to the rock of the rude dwelling. Then he heard from that high hill, in a rough cave, on a bank beyond the brook, a marvellously savage noise. Lo, the cliff clattered as though it would split, as if one were grinding a scythe on a grindstone. It whirred and screeched like water at a mill; it rushed and rang that it was ruth to hear.

"By God," quoth Gawain then, "that gear, I fancy, is being prepared to give me a good reception. Yet though I must lose my life, fear shall never make me change colour."

10. Then the knight called full high: "Who dwells in this place to keep covenant with me? For now the good Gawain is passing right here. If any wight wishes ought, let him come hither fast, now or never, to fulfill his need!"

"Abide!" quoth one on the bank over his head. "Thou shalt have in all haste that which I promised thee once."

Yet he kept on with that noise sharply for a while, turning and whetting, ere he would come down. And then he crossed by a crag and came from a hole, whirling out of a dark place with a fell weapon — a Danish axe new dight, to give the blow with. It had fast to the helve a great head, sharpened on the stone. Four feet long was the weapon — no less, by that lace that gleamed full bright. And the man in the green was arrayed as before — both his skin and his limbs, locks, and beard; save that on foot he strides fairly on the earth. He set the steel shaft to the stone and stalked beside it. When he came to the water, where he did not wish to wade, he hopped over on his axe, and fiercely advanced, with savage ferocity pacing the broad snow-covered glade. Sir Gawain met the knight and bowed to him, not at all low. The other said, "Now, sweet sir, in a covenant a man can trust thee."

11. "Gawain," quoth the green warrior, "may God preserve thee. Indeed thou art welcome, hero, to my place; and thou hast timed thy travel as a true man should. And thou knowest the covenants made between us; at this time twelve month, thou tookest what fell to thee, — and I at this New Year was to repay you handsomely. And now we are in this valley entirely alone; here are no men to part us, however we may behave. Have thy helm off thy head, and have here thy pay. Make no more debate than I offered thee then, when thou whipped off my head at one blow."

"Nay," quoth Gawain, "by God that lent me life, I shall grudge thee not a whit whatever misfortune falls. But arrange thee for thy one stroke, and I shall stand still and hinder thee not the least from doing the work as you like."

He bent the neck and bowed down, showing the flesh all bare; and behaved as if he cared not. For no dread would he flinch.

12. Then the man in the green got ready quickly, gathered up his grim tool to smite Gawain. With all the might in his body he bare it aloft, and aimed a savage blow as though he wished to kill him. Had it driven down as earnestly as he feinted, the ever doughty one would have been dead of his dint. But Gawain glanced to one side on the gisarm as it came gliding down to slay him there in the glade, and shrank a little with the shoulders from the sharp iron. The other warrior with a quick motion withheld the bright weapon, and then he reproved the prince with many proud words.

"Thou art not Gawain," said the man, "who is held so good, who never flinched for any army by hill nor by vale; and now thou fleest for fear before thou feelest any harm. Such cowardice I never heard of that knight. I neither winced nor fled, sir, when thou didst strike, nor tried any tricks in King Arthur's house. My head flew to my foot, and yet I never budged; and thou, ere any harm taken, art fearful in heart. Wherefore the better man I ought to be called for it."

"I flinched once," quoth Gawain, "and will do so no more. Yet if my head should fall on the stones, I cannot restore it.

13. "But make ready, sir, by thy faith, and bring me to the point. Deal to me my destiny, and do it promptly; for I shall stand thee a stroke, and not start again till thine axe has hit me — have here my troth."

"Have at thee then!" quoth the other, and heaves it aloft, and aims as savagely as if he were mad. He strikes at him mightily, but touches the man not; for he withheld his hand cleverly ere it could hurt. Gawain awaits it properly and flinches with no member, but stands still as a stone, or a stump that is twisted into the rocky ground with a hundred roots.

Then merrily spoke the man in the green: "So, now thou hast thy heart whole it behoves me to hit. Now keep back the fine hood that Arthur gave thee, and see if thou canst keep thy neck whole from this stroke."

Said Gawain in great anger: "Why, thrash on, thou wild man! Thou threatenest too long. I guess that thine own heart is timid!"

"Forsooth," quoth the other warrior, "thou speakest so fiercely that I will not delay thine errand a bit longer." Then he takes his stride to strike and knits both brow and lip. No wonder Gawain mislikes it and gives up all thought of escape.

14. Lightly he lifts his axe and lets the edge come down fairly on the bare neck. Yet though he smote rudely, it hurt him but little; only cut him on one side so that it severed the skin. The sharp bit reached the flesh through the fair fat, so that the bright blood shot over his shoulders to the earth. And when the hero saw the blood glint on the snow, he leaped forth more than a spear's length, eagerly seized his helm, cast it on his head, threw his shoulders under his fair shield, pulled out a bright sword and fiercely spoke. Never in this world since he was born of his mother was he half so blithe.

"Cease, sir, of thy blow! Offer me no more. I have without strife taken a stroke in this place; and if thou givest me more, I shall promptly repay and yield quickly again, trust thou that! Only one stroke falls to me here. The covenant which we made in Arthur's halls provided just that; and therefore, courteous sir, now hold!"

15. The warrior turned from him and rested on his axe. He set the shaft on the ground, leaned on the head, and beheld how the doughty hero stood his ground grimly, fully armed and devoid of fear. In his heart it pleased him. Then with a great voice, and a huge laugh, he spoke merrily to the hero: "Bold sir, in this place be not so savage. Nobody has here unmannerly mishandled thee, nor done but according to covenant made at the king's court. I promised thee a stroke and thou hast it; hold thee well paid. I release thee of the remnant, of all other rights. If I had been skilful peradventure I could have given you a worse buffet. First I menaced you merrily with a pure feint, and gave thee no blow; which was but justice, considering the covenant which we made on the first night, and which thou held with me trustily; for truly all the gain thou gave me as a good man should. The second feint this morning, sir, I proffered thee, because thou didst kiss my fair wife and didst hand the kisses over to me; for these two occasions I gave thee here but two bare feints without harm. A true man truly restores; such an one need dread no harm. At the third time thou didst fail; and so take thee that tap.

16. "For it is my weed that thou wearest, that same woven girdle. Mine own wife gave it thee, I know well, forsooth. Now know I well thy kisses, and thy virtues also. And as for the wooing of my wife, I managed it myself. I sent her to try thee, and truly it seems to me thou art the most faultless hero that ever went on foot. As a pearl is of greater price than white peas, so is Gawain, in good faith, compared with other gay knights. But in this case, sir, you lacked a little, and loyalty failed you. But that was for no amorous work, nor wooing either, but because ye loved your life, — the less I blame you."

That other brave man stood a great while in a study; so stricken was he for grief that he groaned within. All the blood of his breast rushed to his face; and he shrank for shame when the warrior talked. This was the first word that the man spoke — "Cursed be cowardice and covetousness both! In you is villainy and vice, that destroy virtue." Then he caught at the knot and loosed the fastening; fiercely reached the belt to the warrior himself. "Lo! there is the deception, foul may it fall! For fear of thy knock cowardice taught me to make a truce with covetousness, to forsake my nature, which is generosity and loyalty, that belong to knights. Now am I faulty and false, and a coward have ever been. From treachery and untruth ever come sorrow and care. Here I confess to you, knight, that my conduct is all faulty. Let me but please you now, and after I shall beware."

17. Then the other laughed and said courteously: "I hold it quite remedied, the harm that I had. Thou hast made a clean confession, acknowledging all thy misdeeds, and hast received the penance openly from the point of my edge. I hold thee quit of that plight, and purified as clean as if thou hadst never forfeited since thou was first born. And I give thee, sir, the girdle that is gold hemmed. Since it is green, as is my gown, Sir Gawain, ye may think upon this same adventure where thou goest forth among great princes; and this shall be a genuine token among chivalrous knights of the adventure of the green chapel, and ye shall come again this New Year to my dwelling, and we shall revel the remnant of this rich feast full well." The lord pressed the invitation and said, "With my wife, who was your great enemy, I think we shall reconcile you."

18. "Nay, forsooth," quoth the hero; and seizing his helm, he took it off quickly and thanked the warrior. "I have had a good visit, bliss betide you; and may He pay you well who directs all mercies. Commend me to that courteous one, your comely mate; both the one and the other, my honoured ladies, who have thus with their craft quaintly beguiled their knight. But it is no wonder that a fool should rave, and through wiles of women be won to sorrow. For so was Adam beguiled by one, and Solomon by many, indeed; and Samson also, Delilah dealt him his weird; and David thereafter was deceived by Bethsheba, who suffered much sorrow. Since these men were plagued by their wiles, it were a huge gain to love them well and believe them not — if a person but could; for these men were of old the best, and the most fortunate, excellent above all others under the heavens; and all they were beguiled by women whom they had to do with.[1] If I be now deceived, meseems I might be excused.

19. "But your girdle," quoth Gawain, "God reward you for it! That will I keep with good will; not for the precious gold, nor the samite nor the silk, nor the wide pendants, for its wealth nor for its beauty nor for its fine work; but in sign of my fault I shall behold it oft; when I ride in renown I shall lament to myself the fault and the deceit of the crabbed flesh, how tender it is to catch stains of filth; and thus when pride shall prick me for prowess of arms, a look on this love-lace shall moderate my heart. But one thing I would pray you — may it displease you not — since ye are lord of the land yonder where I have stayed worshipfully with you — may the Being who upholds the heaven and sits on high repay you for it! — how name ye your right name? and then no more."

"That shall I tell thee truly," quoth the other then. "Bernlak de Hautdesert I am called in this land through the might of Morgen la Fay, who dwells in my house. She has acquired deep learning, hard-won skill, many of the masteries of Merlin; — for she has at times dealt in rare magic with that renowned clerk, who knows all your knights at home. Morgan the Goddess is therefore her name; no person is so haughty but she can tame him.

20. "She sent me in this wise to your rich hall to assay its pride and try if it were true that circulates about the great renown of the Round Table. She prepared for me this wonder to take away your wits, to have grieved Guinevere and caused her to die through fright of that same man, that ghostly speaker with his head in his hand before the high table. That is she, the ancient lady at home. She is even thine aunt, Arthur's half-sister, the daughter of

[1] This passage is none too clear.

that Duchess of Tintagel upon whom dear Uther afterwards begot Arthur, that is now king. Therefore, I beg you, sir, to come to thine aunt; make merry in my house; my people love thee, and I like thee as well, sir, by my faith as I do any man under God for thy great truth."

But he answered him nay, he would in no wise. They embraced and kissed, each entrusted other to the Prince of Paradise, and they parted right there in the cold. Gawain on horse full fair rides boldly to the king's court, and the knight all in green whithersoever he would.

21. Wild ways in the world Gawain now rides on Gringolet, he who had got the boon of his life. Oft he harboured in houses, and oft without; and many an adventure in vale he had, and won oft; but that I care not at this time to mention in my tale. The hurt was whole that he had got in his neck; and he bare the glistening belt about him, crossed obliquely like a baldric, the lace fastened under his left arm with a knot, in token that he was taken in a fault. And thus he comes to the court, the knight all sound. There wakened joy in that dwelling when the great ones knew that good Gawain had come; joyous it seemed to them. The king kisses the knight, and the queen also; and afterwards many a sure knight, who sought to embrace him and asked him of his journey. And wondrously he tells it, confessing all the trials that he had, the adventure of the chapel, the behavior of the knight, the love of the lady — and, at the last, the lace. He showed them the nick in his neck that he caught at the lord's hands for his unloyalty. He grieved when he had to tell it; he groaned for sorrow, and the blood rushed to his face for shame when he declared it.

22. "Lo! lord," quoth the hero, as he handled the lace, "this that I bear in my neck is the badge of this blame. This is the evil and the loss that I have got from the cowardice and covetousness that I showed there. This is the token of untruth that I am taken in, and I must needs wear it while I may last; for none may hide his shame without mishap, for where it once is incurred, depart will it never."

The king and all the court comfort the knight. They laugh loud at his tale, and lovingly agree that the lords and ladies that belong to the Table, each knight of the brotherhood, should have a baldric, an oblique band about him of a bright green, and wear that for the sake of the hero. And that emblem was accorded the renown of the Round Table, and he was ever after honoured that had it.

As it is told in the best book of romance, thus in Arthur's day this adventure betid, which the Brutus books bear witness of. After Brutus the bold hero first came hither, when the siege and the assault had ceased at Troy, many adventures of this sort happened. Now may He that bore the crown of thorns bring us to his bliss. AMEN.

HONY SOIT QUI MAL PENCE.

WILLIAM LANGLAND(?)

THE VISION OF WILLIAM CONCERNING PIERS THE PLOUGHMAN

VERSION A

PROLOGUE

In a summer season, when soft was the sun,
I clad me in rough clothing, a shepherd as I were;
In habit of a hermit, unholy of works,
Went I wide in this world, wonders to hear.
But on a May morning on Malvern Hills
To me befell a marvel, a fairy thing methought.
I was weary of wandering and went me to rest
Under a broad bank by a burn side;
And as I lay and leaned and looked on the waters,
I slumbered in a sleep, it sounded so pleasant.
Then did I dream a marvellous dream,
That I was in a wilderness, wist I not where;
And as I beheld into the east, on high to the sun,
I saw a tower on a hill-top, splendidly fashioned;
A deep dale beneath, a dungeon therein,
With a deep ditch and dark, and dreadful to see.
A fair field full of folk found I there between,
Of all manner of men, the mean and the rich,
Working and wandering, as the world requireth.
Some put them to the plow, and played full seldom,
In plowing and sowing produced they full hardly
What many of these wasters in gluttony destroy.
And some gave themselves to pride, appareled them accordingly,
In fashion of clothing strangely disguised.
To prayer and to penance put themselves many,
For love of our Lord lived they full hard,
In hope to have the bliss of heaven's kingdom,
As anchorites and hermits that hold themselves in cells,
Covet not in the country to gad all about,
With luxurious living their body to please.
And some chose trade, to prosper the better,
As it seems to our sight that such men should;
And some mirth to make, as minstrels can,
And get gold with their glee, guiltless, I trow.
But jesters and buffoons, Judas's children,
Found for themselves fantasies and of themselves fools made,
Yet have their wits at command, to work if they will.
What Paul preached of them I dare not prove here;
Qui loquitur turpiloquium,[1] he is Lucifer's servant.
Askers and beggars fast about flitted,
Till their bags and their bellies brimful were crammed;
Feigned for their food, fought at the alehouse;
In gluttony, God wot, go they to bed
And rise up with ribaldry, these bullying beggar-knaves;
Sleep and sloth follow them ever.
Pilgrims and palmers pledge themselves together
To seek the shrine of St. James and saints at Rome;
Went forth in their way with many wise tales,
And had leave to lie all their life after.
Hermits in a band with hooked staves
Went to Walsingham, and their wenches after.

[1] He who speaketh baseness.

Great lubbers and long, that loath were to work,
Clothed themselves in capes to be known for brethren,
And some dressed as hermits their ease to have.
I found there friars, all the four orders,
Preaching to the people for profit of their bellies,
Interpreting the gospel as they well please,
For covetousness of capes construes it ill;
For many of these masters may clothe themselves at will,
For money and their merchandise meet oft together.
Since Charity hath turned trader, and shriven chiefly lords,
Many wonders have befallen in these few years.
Unless Holy Church now be better held together
The most mischief on earth will mount up fast.
There preached a pardoner, as he a priest were,
And brought up a bull with bishop's seals,
And said he himself would absolve them all
From breach of fasting and broken vows.
The laymen liked him well, believed his speech,
And came up kneeling and kissed his bull;
He banged them with his brevet,[1] and bleared their eyes,
And purchased with his parchment rings and brooches.
Thus ye give your gold gluttony to help,
And grant it to rascals that run after lechery.
Were the bishop holy and worth both his ears,
They should not be so brazen to deceive so the people.
Yet it is not against the bishop that the knave preacheth;
But the parish priest and pardoner share the silver
That the poor parishioners should have but for them.
Parsons and parish priests complain to their bishops
That their parish hath been poor since the pestilence[2] time,
And ask leave and licence at London to dwell
To sing there for simony,[3] for silver is sweet.
There hang about a hundred in hoods of silk,
Sergeants, it seems, to serve at the bar;
Plead at the law for pence and for pounds,
Not for love of our Lord unloose their lips once.
Thou mightest better measure the mist on Malvern hills
Than get a mum of their mouth till money be shown.
I saw there bishops bold and bachelors of divinity
Become clerks of account, the king to serve;
Archdeacons and deacons, that dignity have
To preach to the people and poor men to feed,
Have leapt to London, by leave of their bishops,
To be clerks of the King's Bench, to the country's hurt.
Barons and burgesses, and husbandmen also,
I saw in that assembly, as ye shall hear hereafter.
Bakers, butchers, and brewers many,
Woollen weavers, and weavers of linen,
Tailors, tanners, and fullers also,
Masons, miners, and many other crafts,
Ditchers and delvers, that do their work ill,
And drive forth the long day with "Dieu vous sauve, dame Emma."[4]
Cooks and their boys cry "Hot pies, hot!
Good geese and pigs, go dine, go dine!"
Taverners to them told the same tale
With good wine of Gascony and wine of Alsace,
Of Rhine and of Rochelle, the roast to digest.
All this I saw sleeping, and seven times more.

PASSUS I

What this mounttain meaneth, and this dark dale,
And this fair field full of folk, fairly I shall you show.

[1] Letter of indulgence.
[2] Probably the great plague of 1348–1349.
[3] Getting money singing anniversary masses for the dead.
[4] "God save you, dame Emma"—apparently a popular song.

A lady lovely in face, in linen clothed,
Came down from the cliff, and called me gently,
And said, "Son, sleepest thou? Seest thou these people
All how busy they be about vanity?
The most part of the people that pass now on earth,
If they have honour in this world, they care for nothing better;
Of other heaven than here they have no regard."
I was afraid of her face, though she fair were,
And said, "Pardon, madame, what does this mean?"
"This tower and this hill," quoth she, "Truth is therein,
And would that ye wrought as his word teacheth,
For he is Father of faith, that formed you all
Both with skin and with face, and gave you five senses
For to worship him therewith, while ye be here,
And because he commanded the earth to serve you each one
With woollen, with linen, with livelihood at need,
In moderate manner, to put you at ease,
And commanded of his courtesy in common three things,
Their names are needful and to name them I propose
By rule and by reason, to rehearse them as follows:
The one clothing is, from chill you to save,
And the second meat at meals, against discomfort of thyself;
And drink when thou art dry, but do it not out of reason
So that thou be the worse when thou work shouldest.
. . . . . .
Dread delightful drink, and thou shalt do the better:
Moderation is medicine, though you crave much.
All is not good for the soul that pleaseth the body,
Nor all food to the body that is dear to the soul.
Believe not thy body, for a liar him teacheth
(That is, the wicked world) thee to betray.
For the fiend and thy flesh follow together
And injure thy soul — set it in thy heart;
And that thou shouldest beware, I teach thee the better."
"Ah, madame, *merci*," quoth I, "thy words please me well.
But the money on this earth, that men so fast hold,
Tell me to whom that treasure belongeth."
"Go to the Gospel," quoth she, "that God speaks himself,
When the people asked him about a penny in the temple,
If they should honor therewith Caesar their king.
And he asked of them of whom spake the lettering,
And whom the image was like that thereon stood.
'Caesar,' they said, 'we see well, each one.'
Reddite ergo quae sunt Caesaris Caesari et quae sunt Dei Deo.[1]
'Then render,' quoth Christ, 'what to Caesar belongeth,
And what is God's to God, or else ye do ill.'
For Right Reason should rule you all,
And Common Sense be warden, our wealth to guard,
And tower of our treasure to give it you at need;
For husbandry and he hold well together."
Then I asked her fairly, for [the sake of] him that made her,
"That dungeon in that deep vale, that dreadful is to see,
What may it mean, madame, I thee beseech,"
"That is the Castle of Care," quoth she; "whoso cometh therein
May curse that he was born to body or to soul.
Therein dwelleth a wight that Wrong is called,
Father of falseness, — he founded it himself.
Adam and Eve he egged on to do ill;
Counselled Cain to kill his brother;
Judas he cheated with the Jews' silver,
And on an elder tree hanged him after.
He is a hinderer of love, and lieth to all those

[1] *Matthew*, xxii, 20.

That trust in their treasure, wherein is no truth."
Then had I wonder in my wits what woman it might be
That such wise words of Holy Writ me showed;
And I greeted her in the High Name, ere she thence went,
What she might be indeed that taught me so fairly.
"Holy Church I am," quoth she, "thou oughtest to know me,
I received thee first, and thy faith taught thee.
Thou broughtest me pledges my bidding to do,
And loyally to love me, while thy life lasted."
Then kneeled I on my knees and cried to her for grace,
And prayed her piteously to pray for our sins,
And eke to teach me kindly on Christ to believe,
That I might work the will of Him that made me a man.
"Show me no treasure, but tell me this same:
How I may save my soul, thou that holy art held."
"When all treasure is tested, truth is the best;
I appeal to 'God is Love' to judge the truth.
It is as precious a jewel as dear God himself.
For whoso is true of his tongue, and telleth naught else,
Doth his work with truth, and doth no man ill;
He is accounted of the Gospel, on earth and above,
And also likened to our Lord, by Saint Luke's words.
Clerks that know it should teach it about,
For Christians and non-Christians, each claims it for himself.
Kings and knights should conduct themselves reasonably,
And rightly roam the realms about,
And take trespassers and tie them fast
Till truth had determined the trespass to the end.
For David, in his days, he dubbed knights,
Made them swear on their sword to serve truth ever,
That is plainly the profession that pertaineth to knights,
And not to fast one Friday in five score years,
But to hold with men and women that seek the truth,
And leave off for no love nor grasping of gifts;
And he that oversteps that point is apostate of the order,
For Christ, king of kings, knighted ten,
Cherubim and Seraphim, seven such and another,[1]
And gave them mastery and might, in his majesty,
And over his army made them archangels,
And taught them through the Trinity truth to know,
And to be obedient to his bidding, he bade them naught else.
Lucifer with legions learned it in heaven.
He was loveliest to see, after our Lord,
Till he broke obedience through boast of himself.
Then fell he with his fellows, and fiends they became,
Out of heaven into hell hobbled fast,
Some into the air, and some to the earth, and some into hell deep;
But Lucifer lieth lowest of them all;
For pride that he put on, his pain hath no end.
And all that work wrong, wend they shall,
After their death day, and with that devil dwell.
But they that work that word that Holy Writ teacheth,
And end, as I said before, in profitable works,
May be sure that their souls shall to heaven,
Where Truth is in Trinity and crowneth them all.
For I say certainly, in view of the texts,
When all treasure is tried, Truth is the best.
Teach it to the ignorant, for the lettered know it,
That Truth is a treasure, the finest on earth."
"Yet have I no natural knowledge," quoth I, "thou must teach me better,
By what power in my body it beginneth, and where."
"Thou dotest, dolt," quoth she, "dull are thy wits.

[1] B C. A reads *an al the four ordres.*

It is a natural knowledge that tells thee in the heart
For to love thy lord liefer than thyself;
No deadly sin to do, die though thou shouldest.
This, I trow, is Truth! Whoso can teach thee better
See that thou suffer him to say it, and then teach it further!
For thus teacheth us His Word — work thou thereafter —
That Love is the liefest thing that our Lord asketh,
And eke the plant of peace. Preach it to thy harp
Where thou art merry at thy meat, when men bid thee sing;
For from the heart's own wisdom springeth the song.
That belongs to the Father that formed us all,
He looked on us with love, and let His Son die
Meekly for our misdeeds, to amend us all.
And yet wished He no woe to them that wrought Him that pain,
But meekly with mouth mercy He besought,
To have pity on that people that tortured Him to death.
Here thou mightest see example, in Himself alone,
How He was mighty and meek, that mercy did grant
To them that hanged him high, and his heart pierced.
Therefore I recommend the rich to have ruth on the poor,
Though ye be mighty at law, be meek in your works.
Eadem mensura qua mensi fueritis, remecietur vobis.[1]
For the same measure that ye mete, amiss or otherwise,
Ye shall be weighed therewith, when ye wend hence.
For though ye be true of tongue, and honestly win,
And eke as chaste as a child that in church weepeth,
Unless ye live truly and also love the poor,
And such good as God sent truly share,
Ye have no more merit in mass nor in hours
Than Mawkin of her maidenhood that no man desireth.
For James the gentle bound it in his book,
That faith without works is feebler than nothing,
And dead as a doornail unless the deed follow.
Chastity without charity — know thou in truth —
Is as useless as a lamp that no light is in.
Many chaplains are chaste, who charity have none;
No men than they are harder when they are advanced;
Unkind to their kin and to all Christians;
They devour their own alms and demand ever more.
Such chastity without charity will be claimed[2] in hell.
Curates that should keep themselves clean in their bodies,
They are cumbered with care and cannot escape it,
So hard are they with avarice clamped together;
That is no truth of the Trinity, but treachery of hell,
And a teaching of laymen more grudgingly to give.
For these are words written in the evangel, *Date et dabitur vobis;*[3] for I deal to you all
Your grace and your good hap, your wealth to win,
And therewith acknowledge me naturally for what I send you.
This is the lock of Love that letteth out my grace
To comfort the careworn, cumbered with sin.
Love is the liefest thing that our Lord asketh,
And eke the straight way that goeth into heaven.
Therefore I say as I said before, in view of these texts,
When all treasures are tried, Truth is the best.
Now have I told thee what Truth is, that no treasure is better,
I may no longer linger; now our Lord keep thee!"

[1] *Matthew*, vii, 2.

[2] B *chained.*

[3] Give and it shall be given unto you, *Luke*, vi, 38.

PASSUS II

Yet kneeled I on my knees, and cried to her for grace,
And said, "Mercy, madame, for the love of Mary of heaven,
That bore the blessed babe, that bought us on the cross,
Teach me the natural skill to know the False."
"Look on the left hand," quoth she, "and see where he standeth,
Both False and Flattery, and all his whole following!"
I looked on the left side, as the lady me taught;
Then was I ware of a woman, wonderfully clothed,
Trimmed with fur, the richest upon earth,
Crowned with a crown, the king hath no better.
All her five fingers were furnished with rings
Of the preciousest jewelry that prince ever wore.
In red scarlet she rode, ribboned with gold,
There is no queen more gorgeous that on earth quick is and alive.
"What is this woman," quoth I, "thus wonderfully attired?"
"That is Meed,[1] the maiden," quoth she, "that hath me marred oft,
And lied about my lore to lords about.
In the Pope's palace she is as privy as myself;
And so should she not be, for Wrong was her sire.
Out of Wrong she sprang to misfortune of many.
I ought to be higher than she, for I am better born.
Tomorrow is the marriage made of Meed and False;
Flattery, with fair speech, hath brought them together,
And Guile hath persuaded her to grant all his will.
And all is by Liar's leading that they live together.
Tomorrow is the marriage made, true as I tell thee,
That thou might'st know, if thou wilt, what they all are
That belong to that lordship, the great and the small.
Know them there if thou canst, and keep thee from them all,
If thou desirest to dwell with Truth in his bliss;
Learn His law that is so loyal, and then teach it further.
I may no longer linger, to our Lord I commend thee.
And become a good man, spite of greed, I advise."
When she was gone from me, I looked and beheld
All this rich retinue that reigned with False
Were bid to the bridal on both of the sides.
Sir Simony is sent for, to seal the charters
That False or Flattery at any price had got,
And dower Meed therewith, in marriage for ever.
But there was neither hall nor house that might harbour the people
That each field was not full of folk al about.
In midst of a mountain, at the hour of mid-morning
Was pitched a pavilion, a proud one for the nonce;
And ten thousand of tents spread out besides,
For knights from the country and strangers about,
For assizers, for summoners, for sellers, for buyers,
For ignorant, for learned, for laborers in villages,
And for the flattering friars, all the four orders,
All to witness well what the deed desired,
In what manner Meed in marriage was endowed;
To be fastened with False, the fee was levied.
Then Flattery fetched her forth, and to False gave her
On condition that False shall sustain her forever,
She to be obedient and ready his bidding to fulfil,
In bed and at board, obedient and courteous,
And as Sir Simony shall say, to follow his will.

[1] Meed is properly reward; but the signification here varies from legitimate payment to gross bribery. It is often best translated by "graft."

Now Simony and Civil Law stand forth both,
Unfolding the dowry that Falseness made,
And thus began these men and bellowed full loud:
"This know and witness, all that dwell on earth,
That I, Flattery, endow False with that maiden Meed,
To be present in pride, for poor or for rich,[1]
With the Earldom of Envy ever to last,
With all the Lordship [of Lechery][2] in length and in breadth;
With the Kingdom of Covetousness I crown them together,
With the Isle of Usury and Avarice the false,
Gluttony and great oaths I give them together,
With all delights and lusts the devil to serve,
With all the service of Sloth I endow them together;
To have and to hold, and all their heirs after,
With the appurtenances of purgatory, into the pains of hell:
Yielding for this thing, at the year's end,
Their souls to Satan, to send into pain,
There to dwell with Wrong, while God is in heaven."
In witness of which thing Wrong was the first,
Pierce the pardoner, a Pauline doctor,
Bett the beadle of Buckinghamshire,
Randolph the reeve of the Rutland district,
Taborers and tumblers and tapsters many,
Mund the miller and many more besides.
In the date of the devil[3] the deed was sealed,
In sight of Sir Simony and by notaries' signets.
Then tormented was Theology when he this tale heard,
And said to Civil Law, "Sorrow on thy head
Such a wedding to make to render Truth wroth;
And ere this wedding be wrought, woe thee betide!
For Meed is a wealthy one, a maiden with goods;
God grant us to give her where Truth will assign!
And thou hast given her to a trickster, God give thee sorrow!
The text telleth not so, Truth knows the sooth:
Dignus est operarius mercede sua;[4]
'Worthy is the workman his hire to have;'
And thou hast bestowed her on False, fie on thy law!
For lechers and liars lightly thou trustest,
Simony and thyself injure Holy Church;
Ye shall abide it both, by God that me made,
At one year's end when ye reckon shall;
He and these notaries annoy the people.
For well ye know, deceivers, unless your wits fail,
That False is a schemer, a shirker of work,
And a bastard born of Beelzebub's kin.
And Meed is a jewelled one, a maiden of gentry,
She might kiss the king for cousin, if she would.
Work by wisdom and then by wit,
Lead her to London, where law is handled,
See if legally it be allowed that they lie together,
And if the justice will adjudge her to be joined with False.
Yet beware of the wedding, for wise is Truth,
For Conscience is of his council, and knoweth you each one;
And if he find such defect that ye with False hold
It shall oppress your souls sorely at last."
To this Civil Law assented, but Simony would not
Till he had silver for his advice and his seal.
Then fetched Flattery forth florins enough,
And bade Guile go and give gold about,
And especially to these notaries that they have no lack;
And fee False Witness with florins enough,
For he can master Meed and make her do his will;
For where falseness is often found, there faith faileth.
When the gold was given, great were the thanks
To False and to Flattery, for their fair gifts.

[1] B *To be prynces in pryde and pouerte to despise.*
[2] B C.
[3] Presumably, in parody of *Anno Domini*.
[4] *Luke*, x, 7.

Many came to comfort False against care,
And swore on holy relics, "Cease shall we never
Ere Meed be thy wedded wife, through wisdom of us all.
For we have so mastered Meed with our smooth words
That she agrees to go with a good will
To London to look if the law will
Judge you jointly to be joined for ever."
Then was False fain, and Flattery blithe,
And had all men called from the country about
To array them ready, both burgesses and sheriffs,
To wend with them to Westminster, to witness the deed.
Then hunted they for horses to carry them thither;
But Flattery fetched forth foals of the best,
And set Meed on the back of a sheriff newly shod,
And False on a juror that softly trotted,
(For Falseness against the faith jurors seduceth,
Through cumbering of covetousness, to climb over truth,
That the faith is down trodden and falsely defamed,
And Falseness is become a lord, and lives as he likes):
Flattery on a fair speech, full finely attired;
For fair speech without faith is brother to Falseness;
And thus jurors are summoned to serve the false,
And fair speech for Flattery who many deceives.
Then notaries who had no horses, annoyed they were
That Simony and Civil Law should go on foot.
Then said Civil Law, and swore by the rood,
That summoners should be saddled and serve them each one;
"And have provisors appareled, in palfrey wise,
Sir Simony himself shall sit on their backs,
And all deans and sub-deans as prancers prepare
For they shall bear bishops and bring them to rest.
The people of the Paulines, for pleas in the consistory,
Shall serve myself, who Civil Law am called;
Put a cart saddle on our commissary, our cart he shall draw,
And fetch our victuals from the fornicators;
And make of Liar a long cart, to draw all these others,
Story-tellers and frauds that on foot remain."
Now False and Flattery fare forth together,
And Meed in the midst, and all the crowd after.
Leisure I lack to tell the train that follows them,
Of as many manners of men as on earth live.
But Guile was leader and guided them all.
Soothness saw them well and said but little,
But pricked on his palfrey, and passed them all,
And came to the king's court, and Conscience told,
And Conscience to the king repeated it again.
"Now, by Christ," quoth the king, "if I might catch
False or Flattery, or any of his fellows,
I would be wreaked on these wretches that work so ill,
And have them hanged by the neck, and all that maintain them;
No man on earth shall bail out[1] the least of them,
But right as the law decides, let it fall on them all.
And command the constable, that came at the first,
To attack the traitors, in spite of any bribe;
I order you to fetter False fast, in spite of any kind of gifts,
And to cut off Guile's head, let him go no further;
And bring Meed to me, in spite of them all.
To Simony and Civil Law I send a warning
That Holy Church for them is harmed for ever.
And if ye catch Liar, let him not escape
Being set on the pillory, in spite of any prayer;
I bid thee watch for them well, let none of them escape."
Dread at the door stood, and the din heard,

[1] B C. *meynprise.* A *meyntene.*

And quickly went he to warn the False,
And bade him flee fast, and his fellows too.
Then False for fear fled to the friars,
And Guile took to flight, in fear of death;
But merchants met him, and made him abide,
Besought him in their shops to sell their ware,
Apparelled him as a 'prentice, the people to serve.
Lightly Liar leapt away thence,
Lurked through lanes, lugged about by many.
He was nowhere welcome, spite of his many tales,
But hunted out everywhere, and ordered to pack.
Pardoners had pity, and took him indoors,
Washed him and wrung [his clothes], and wound him in clouts,
And sent him on Sundays with seals to churches,
And for pence gave pardon, pounds at a time.
This learned the leeches, and letters to him sent.
To dwell with them, diagnoses to make.
Grocers spake with him to look after their wares,
For he had skill in their craft, and knew many gums.
Minstrels and messengers met with him once,
And held him back half a year and eleven weeks.
Friars, with fair speeches, fetched him thence;
That visitors might know him not, kept him like a friar;
But he hath leave to leap out, as often as he liketh,
And is welcome when he will, and dwells with them oft.
And all fled for fear and flew into corners;
Save Meed the maiden, no man dared abide;
But, truly to tell, she trembled for fear,
And wept, too, and wrung her hands, when she was arrested.

PASSUS III

Now is Meed the maiden taken, and no more of them all,
By beadles and bailiffs, brought to the king.
The king called a clerk, I know not his name,
To take Meed the maiden, and make her at ease.
"I shall try her myself, and truly inquire
What man in this world would be dearest to her.
And if she work by my wit, and my will follow,
I shall forgive her the guilt, so help me God!"
Courteously the clerk then, as the king commanded,
Took the maiden by the middle, and brought her to the chamber.
There was mirth and minstrelsy to please Meed withal.
Those that dwell at Westminster worship her all.
Gently, with joy, the Justice soon
Repaired to the chamber where the lady was,
Comforted her kindly, and made her good cheer,
And said, "Mourn thou not, Meed, nor be thou sorrowful,
For we will guide the king and thy way shape,
For all the craft of Conscience, and scheme, as I trow,
That thou shalt have both might and mastery, and do what thou likest
With the king and the commons, and the court too."
Mildly then Meed thanked them all
For their great goodness, and gave them each one
Goblets of pure gold, and pieces of silver,
Rings with rubies, and riches enough,
The least of their company a mutton[1] of gold.
Then took they their leave, these lordings, of Meed.
With that there came clerks to comfort the same:
"We bid thee be blithe, for we be thine own
To work thy will, while our life lasteth."
Courteously then she promised them the same,
To love them loyally and make them lords,
And in consistory at court to tell their names.

[1] A gold coin.

"No ignorance shall hinder them, the most ignorant that I love,
From being advanced; for I am known
Where learned clerks are left in the lurch."
Then came there a confessor, caped like a friar;
To Meed the maiden full meekly he bowed,
And said full softly, as if it were in shrift,
"Though learned and lay had all by thee lain,
And though False had followed thee these fifteen winters,
I shall absolve thee myself, for a load of wheat,
And also be thy bawd, and bear well thy errand
Among clerks and knights, to bring down Conscience."
Then Meed, for her misdeeds, to that man kneeled,
And shrove her of her sins, shamefully, I trow.
She told him a tale, and gave him a noble —
To be her bedesman, and her bawd after.
Then he absolved her soon, and next to her said,
"We have a window a-making, will cost us full dear:
If thou wouldst glaze the gable, and grave therein thy name,
Secure should thy soul be to dwell in heaven."
"Knew I that," quoth the woman, "there is neither window nor altar,
That I would n't make or mend, and my name write thereon,
That each man should say, I should be sister of your house."
But God to all good folk such graving forbids,
And saith, *Nesciat sinistra quid faciat dextra:*[1]
'Let not thy left hand, late nor early,
Be aware what thy right hand works or bestows.'
But share it so secretly that pride be not seen
Neither in sight nor in soul; for God himself knoweth
Who is courteous or kind, covetous or the contrary.
Therefore, I teach you, lords, such writing to leave,
The writing in windows of your good deeds,
Or calling to God's people, when ye give your doles;
Peradventure you have your hire for it here.
For our Saviour it saith, and himself preacheth,
Amen dico vobis, receperunt mercedem suam;[2]
'Here verily they have received their reward forthwith.'
Mayors and masters, and ye that are go-betweens
'Twixt the king and the commons, to guard the laws,
To punish on pillories, or on cucking-stools,
Brewers, bakers, butchers, and cooks,
For these are the men on earth that most harm work
To the poor people that buy in small parcels.
They pilfer from the people privily and oft,
And grow rich through retailing, and buy themselves rents
With what the poor people should put in their bellies.
For if they acted honestly, they would not build so high,
Nor buy burgh holdings, be ye certain.
But Meed the maiden the mayor she besought
From all such sellers silver to take,
Or presents, not in pence, as cups of silver,
Rings with rubies, the retailer to favor.
"For my love," quoth the lady, "love them well, each one,
And suffer them to sell somewhat beyond reason."
But Solomon the sage, a sermon he made,
To amend mayors and men that guard the law,
And told them this theme that I shall tell now:
Ignis devorabit tabernacula eorum qui libenter accipiunt munera.[3]
Among these lettered[4] men this Latin meaneth
That fire shall fall and burn at the last
The houses and the homes of them that desire
For to have gifts in youth or in eld.

[1] *Matthew*, vi, 3.
[2] *Matthew*, vi, 2.
[3] Fire shall consume the tabernacles of bribery, *Job*, xv, 34.
[4] A *lewede*.

Now be ye ware, if ye will, ye masters of the law,
For the truth shall be sought of your souls, so help me God!
The toleration that ye grant such wrongs to work.
While the chance is in your choice, choose ye the best.
The king came from council, and called for Meed,
And sent off quickly servants to fetch her,
And brought her to the presence, with bliss and with joy;
With mirth and with minstrelsy they pleased her each one.
Courteously the king commenceth to tell,
To Meed the maiden speaketh those words:
"Unwisely, I wis, wrought hast thou oft;
But worse wroughtest thou never than when thou False took.
But I forgive thee this guilt, and grant thee my grace;
Henceforth to thy deathday do so no more.
I have a knight called Conscience, come lately from far,
If he wish thee to wife, wilt thou him have?"
"Yea, lord," quoth that lady, "Lord forbid I should other!
Unless I bow to your bidding, hang me at once!"
Then was Conscience called to come and appear
Before the king and his council, clerks and others.
Kneeling, Conscience to the king made obeisance,
To know what his will was, and what he would do.
"Wilt thou wed this woman," quoth the king, "if I will assent?
She is fain of thy fellowship, and would be thy mate."
"Nay," quoth Conscience to the king, "Christ forbid it me!
Ere I wed such a wife, woe me betide!
She is frail of her flesh, fickle of her tongue,
She maketh men misdo many score times;
Trusting to her treasure, find sorrow full many.
To wives and widows wantonness she teacheth;
Learneth them lechery that love her gifts;
Our father Adam[1] she brought down with fair promise;
Poisoned popes, and impaireth Holy Church.
There is no better bawd, by Him that me made!
Between heaven and hell, in earth though men sought.
She is wanton in her wishes, tale-bearing with her tongue,
Common as the cart-road to knaves and to all;
To priests, to minstrels, to lepers in hedges,
Jurors and summoners, such men her praise;
Sheriffs of shires were lost but for her.
She causeth men to lose their land, and their lives after,
And letteth prisoners go, and payeth for them oft.
She giveth the jailer gold and groats together,
To unfetter the false, to flee where they like.
She taketh the true by the top, and tieth him fast,
And for hate hangeth him that harm did never.
They that are curst in consistory count it not at a rush,
For she gives capes to the commissary, and coats to the clerks;
She is absolved as soon as herself it pleaseth.
She may as much do in space of one month
As your secret seal in seven score days.
She is privy with the pope, as provisors know;
Sir Simony and she put seals on the bulls;
She blesseth the bishops, though ignorant they be.
Prebendaries, parsons, priests, she maintaineth,
To keep lemans and concubines all their life days,
And bring forth children against the laws forbidding it.
Where she stands well with the king, woe to the realm!
For she is favorable to False who tramples Truth oft.
Barons and burgesses she brings into servitude,
She bribes with her jewels, our justices she ruins.

[1] So Vernon MS. All others read *Your father;* i.e. Edward II.

She lieth against the law, and hindereth it so hard
That faith may make no headway, her florins go so thick.
She leadeth the law as she liketh, and love-days maketh,
Bewilderment for a poor man, though he plead ever.
Law is so lordly and loath to make an end
Without presents or pence, it pleaseth full few.
Learning and covetousness she coupleth together.
This is the life of the lady, our Lord give her sorrow!
And all that maintain her, mischance them betide!
For the poor may have no power to complain though they suffer,
Such a master is Meed among men of goods."
Then mourned Meed, and made her moan to the king
To have space to speak, hoping to succeed.
Then the king granted her grace with a good will:
"Excuse thyself if thou canst, I can say no more;
For Conscience hath accused thee, to dismiss thee for ever."
"Nay, lord," quoth that lady, "believe him the worse
When ye know verily where the wrong lieth.
Where mischief is great, lord, Meed may help,
And thou knowest, Conscience, I came not to chide
Nor to defame thy person with a proud heart.
Well thou wittest, Conscience, unless thou wilt lie,
Thou hast hung on my neck eleven times,
And also grasped my gold, and given it where thou likedst.
Why thou art wroth now, seems to me a wonder,
For yet I can, as before, honor thee with gifts,
And maintain thy manhood, more than thou knowest,
And thou hast foully defamed me, before the king here.
For never killed I a king, nor counselled thereto;
Nor did I ever as thou thinkest,[1] I appeal to the king.
In Normandy was he not annoyed for my sake;
But thou thyself, in truth, didst shame him there,
Creptest into a cabin, to keep thy nails from cold,
Thoughtest that winter would have lasted ever,
And dreadedst to have been dead for a dim cloud,
And hastedst homeward for thy belly-hunger.
Without pity, pillager, poor men thou robbedest,
And bore their brass on thy back to Calais to sell.
There I stayed with my lord, his life to save,
Made him mirth full much, to leave off mourning,
Clapped them on the backs, their hearts to embolden,
Made them leap for hope to have me at demand:
Had I been marshal of his men, by Mary of heaven!
I durst have laid my life, and no less bet,
He 'd have been lord of that land, in length and in breadth;
And also king of that kith, his kin to help;
The least bairn of his blood a baron's peer.
Truly, thou Conscience, thou didst counsel him thence,
To leave that lordship for a little silver,
That is the richest realm that the rain falls upon!
It becometh a king who keepeth a realm
To give meed to men that meekly him serve;
To aliens, to all men, to honor them with gifts.
Meed maketh him beloved and held to be a man.
Emperors and earls, and all manner of lords,
Through gifts get young men to run and to ride.
The pope and his prelates presents receive,
And give men meed to maintain their laws.
Servants for their service — ye see well the truth —
Get meed from their masters as they may agree.

[1] A *dust*; B *demest*.

Beggars for their prayers beg men for meed,
Minstrels for their mirth ask for meed.
The king gives meed to his men to make peace in the land;
Men that teach children[1] meed from them crave.
Priests that preach to the people to be good
Ask meed and mass-pence and their meat too.
All kinds of craftsmen crave meed for their 'prentices;
Meed and merchandise must needs go together.
There may no wight, as I ween, without meed live."
"Now," quoth the king to Conscience, "by Christ, as methinks,
Meed is worthy much mastery to have!"
"Nay," quoth Conscience to the king, and kneeled to the ground;
"There be two kinds of meed, my lord, by thy leave.
The one good God of His grace giveth, in His bliss,
To them that work well while they are here.
The prophet preached it, and put in the Psalter,
Qui pecuniam suam non dedit ad usuram, etc.[2]
Take no meed, my lord, from men that are true;
Love them, believe them, for our Lord of heaven's love.
God's meed and His mercy therewith thou mayst win.
But there is a meed without measure that desireth mastery,
To maintain misdoers meed do they take;
And thereof saith the Psalter in the end of the Psalms,
In quorum manibus iniquitates sunt; dextra eorum repleta est muneribus;[3]
That their right hand is heaped full of gifts,
And they that grasp their gifts, so help me God!
They shall abide it bitterly, or the Book lieth.

Priests and parsons, that pleasure desire
And take meed and money for masses that they sing,
Shall have reward in this world, as Matthew hath granted:
Amen dico vobis, receperunt mercedem suam.[4]
What laborers and low folk get from their masters
Is no manner of meed, but moderate hire.
In merchandise is no meed, I may it well avow;
It is a permutation, one penny for another.
But didst thou never read *Kings*,[5] thou recreant Meed,
Why vengeance fell on Saul and his children?
God sent to say, by Samuel's mouth,
That Agag and Amalek, and all his people after,
Should die for a deed that his ancestors had done,
Against Israel, and Aaron, and Moses his brother.
Samuel said to Saul, 'God sendeth thee commandment
To be obedient and ready his bidding to do:
"Wend thither with thy host women to kill,
Children and churls, chop them to death;
Look thou kill the king, covet not his goods
For millions of money; murder them each one,
Men and beasts, burn them all to ashes."'
And because he killed not the king, as Christ himself commanded,
Coveted fair cattle, and killed not his beasts,
But brought with him the beasts, as the Bible telleth,
God sent to say that Saul should die,
And all his seed for that sin shamefully end.
Such a mischief Meed made the king to have,
That God hated him ever, and his heirs after.
The conclusion of this clause care I not to show,
In case it should annoy me; an end will I make:
And even as Agag had it, to some will it happen;

[1] B. A *knoweth clerkes*.
[2] He that putteth not out his money to usury . . . shall never be moved. *Psalms*, xv, 5.
[3] In whose hands is mischief, and their right hand is full of bribes. *Psalms*, xxvi, 10.
[4] Verily I say unto you, they have received their reward. *Matthew*, vi, 2.
[5] *I Samuel*, xv.

Samuel will slay him, and Saul will be blamed,
David shall be diademed and daunt them all,
And one Christian king keep us each one.
Conscience knoweth this, for common sense me taught
That Reason shall reign, and realms govern;
Meed shall no more be master on earth,
But Love and Lowness and Loyalty together.
And on him that trespasseth against Truth, or doth against his will,
Loyalty shall execute the law, or he shall lose his life.
Shall no sergeant for that service wear a silk hood,
Nor any striped robe with rich fur.
Meed, from the misdoers, maketh men so rich
That Law is become a lord, and Loyalty is poor.
Unkindness is commander, and Kindness is banished.
But Common Sense shall come yet, and Conscience together,
And make of Law a laborer, such Love shall arise."

PASSUS IV

"Cease," said the king, "I suffer you no more.
Ye shall be reconciled in truth, and serve me both.
Kiss her," quoth the king, "Conscience, I command."
"Nay, by Christ," quoth Conscience, "I take my leave rather!
Unless Reason advise me thereto, first will I die!"
"And I command thee," quoth the king to Conscience then,
"That thou haste thee to ride, and Reason thou fetch;
Command him that he come, my counsel to hear.
For he shall rule my realm, and advise me the best
About Meed and others, and what man shall wed her;
And take care, Conscience, so help me Christ!
How thou leadest my people, learned and lay."
"I am pleased with that promise," said the fellow then,
And rode right to Reason, and whispered in his ear,
Said as the king sent, and then took his leave.
"I shall array me to ride," quoth Reason, "rest thee awhile," —
And called Cato his servant, courteous of speech —
"Set my saddle upon Suffer-till-I-see-my-time,
And look thou girth him well with very many girths;
Hang on him a heavy bridle to bear his head low;
Yet will he make many a neigh, ere he come there."
Then Conscience on his steed rideth forth fast,
And Reason with him rideth, hurrying hard,
But on a wain Witty and Wisdom together
Followed them fast, for they had to do
In Exchequer and Chancery, to be discharged of things;
And rode fast, for Reason must advise them how best
To save themselves from shame and from harm.
But Conscience came first to court by a mile,
And ran forward with Reason, right to the king.
Courteously the king then came to Reason,
Between himself and his son set him on the bench,
And consulted a great while wisely together.
Then Peace came to parliament, put up petition,
How that Wrong against his will his wife had taken,
And how he ravished Rose, Reynald's love,
And Margaret of her maidenhood, for all she could do.
"Both my geese and my pigs his fellows fetched away;
I dare not for dread of them fight nor chide.
He borrowed of me Bayard, and brought him again never,
Nor any farthing for him, for aught that I could plead.
He maintaineth his men to murder mine own,
Forestalleth me at fairs, brawleth at my bargainings,

Breaketh in my barn-door, and beareth away my wheat,
And giveth me but a tally for ten quarter of oats.
And yet he beat me besides, and lieth by my maiden;
I am not so hardy to look him in the face."
The king knew he said sooth, for Conscience him told.
Wrong was a-feared then, and Wisdom sought
To make his peace with pence, and proffered forth money,
And said, "Had I love from the king, little would I reck
Though Peace and his power complained on me ever."
Wisdom went then, and so did Wit,
Because Wrong had done so wicked a deed,
And warned Wrong then, with such a wise tale:—
"Whoso worketh wilfully maketh wrath oft:
I say it about thyself, thou shalt it soon find.
Unless Meed make it right, thy ill-luck is on thee,
For both thy life and thy land lie in the king's grace."
Wrong then to Wisdom wept for help,
Him for his handy-dandy[1] readily he paid.
Then Wisdom and Wit went together
And took Meed with them, mercy to win.
Peace put forth his head, showed his bloody poll:
"Without guilt, God wot, got I this harm."
Conscience and the king knew the truth,
Knew well that Wrong was a wicked one ever.
But Wisdom and Wit were zealous and eager
To overcome the king with money if they might.
The king swore then, by Christ, and by his crown both,
That Wrong for his works should woe suffer,
And commanded a constable to cast him in irons:
"He shall not these seven years see his feet once."
"God wot," quoth Wisdom, "that were not the best;
If he amends make, let him give surety;
To be a pledge for his bale,[2] and buy him boot,[3]

[1] Probably, corrupt influence.
[2] Injury, harm done. [3] Redress.

And amend his misdeed, and be always the better."
Wit accorded herewith and said to him the same;
"It is better that Boot should bring down Bale
Than that Bale be beaten and Boot be ne'er the better."
Then Meed humbled herself and mercy besought,
And proffered Peace a present all of pure red gold:
"Have this from me," quoth she, "to amend thy harm with,
For I will wager for Wrong, he will do so no more."
Peace then pitifully prayed the king
To have mercy on that man, that harmed him oft;
"Because he hath pledged me amends, as Wisdom him taught,
I forgive him that guilt, with a good-will;
So that ye assent thereto, I can no more say,
For Meed hath made me amends, I may no more ask."
"Nay," quoth the king then, "so God give me bliss!
Wrong wendeth not so away, till I wot more;
Leapt he so lightly away, laugh he would
And again be the bolder to beat my servants;
Unless Reason have ruth on him, he remaineth in the stocks
As long as I live, unless more love change it."
Then some advised Reason to have ruth of that rascal,
And to counsel the king and Conscience both;
That Meed might be surety, Reason they besought.
"Advise me not," quoth Reason, "ruth to have,
Till lords and ladies all love truth,
Till Peronelle's fur be put in her box,
Till over-cherished children be chastened with rods,
Till the holiness of ribalds be held [common] as a hind;
Till clerks and knights be courteous with their mouths
And hate to do their ribaldry, and use it no more;

Till priests their preaching prove in themselves,
And do it in deed, to draw us to God;
Till Saint James be sought where I shall ordain,
And no man go to Galicia, unless he go for ever;
And no Rome-runners for robbers abroad
Bear over sea silver that beareth the king's stamp,
Neither groats nor gold graven with the king's crown,
Upon forfeit of that fee, whoever finds it at Dover,
Unless it be a merchant or his men, or messenger with letters,
Or provisors or priests that popes advance.
"And yet," quoth Reason, "by the rood, I shall no ruth have,
While Meed hath any mastery to plead in this hall;
But I may show you examples, I say it of myself.
For I say it for my soul's sake, if it so were
That I were king with crown, to keep a realm,
Should never Wrong in this world, that I might know of,
Be unpunished by my power, on peril of my soul!
Nor get grace through gift, so help me God!
Nor for meed get mercy, unless meekness cause it.
For *Nullum Malum*, the man, met with *Impunitum*,
And bade *Nullum Bonum* be *irremuneratum*.[1]
Let thy clerk, sir king, construe this in English;
And if thou workest it wisely I wager both my ears
That Law shall be a laborer and cart dung a-field,
And Love shall lead thy land, as it dearly pleaseth thee."
Clerks that were confessors got together in couples
For to construe this clause, and explain it after.
When Reason to these men rehearsed these words,
Was none in that courtroom, great or small,
That held not Reason a master there, and Meed a great wretch.

[1] No evil unpunished; no good unrewarded.

Love made light of Meed, and laughed her to scorn,
And said it so loud that Soothness it heard:
"Whoso wisheth her to wife, for wealth of her goods,
Unless he be picked for a cuckold, cut off both mine ears!"
Was neither Wisdom then, nor Witty his fellow,
That could utter a word, to gainsay Reason;
But stared in a brown study and stood as beasts.
The king accorded, by Christ, to Reason's cunning,
And repeated what Reason had rightly shown:
"But it is hard, by mine head, to bring it hereto,
All my lieges to lead in this level way."
"By Him that was stretched on the rood," quoth Reason to the king,
"Unless I rule thus thy realm, rend out my ribs!
If it be so that obedience be at my command."
"I assent," quoth the king, "by Saint Mary, my lady,
When my council is come, of clerks and of earls.
But readily, Reason, thou ridest not hence,
For as long as I live, let thee go will I not."
"I am ready," quoth Reason, "to remain with thee ever;
So that Conscience be our counsellor, care I for no better."
"I grant gladly," quoth the king, "God forbid he fail us,
And as long as I live, live we together."

PASSUS V

The king and his knights to the church went
To hear matins and mass, and to the meat after.
Then waked I from my winking, I was woful withal
That I had not heavier slept and seen more.
Ere I a furlong had fared, a faintness me seized,
That further might I not a-foot, for default of sleep.
I sat softly adown, and said my creed,
And so I babbled on my beads that it brought me asleep.
Then saw I much more than I before told,

For I saw the field full of folk that I before showed,
And Conscience with a cross came to preach.
He prayed the people to have pity on themselves,
And proved that these pestilences were for pure sin,
And this southwestern wind on a Saturday at even
Was clearly for pride, and for no cause else,
Peartrees and plumtrees were dashed to the ground,
In ensample to men that we should do the better.
Beeches and broad oaks were blown to the earth.
And turned the tail upward in token of dread
That deadly sin ere Doomsday should destroy them all.
On this matter I might mumble full long,
But I say as I saw, so help me God!
How Conscience with a cross commenced to preach.
He bade wasters go work at what they best could,
And win what they wasted with some sort of craft.
He prayed Peronelle her fur-trimming to leave,
And keep it in her coffer for capital at need.
Thomas he taught to take two staves,
And fetch home Felice from the cucking-stool.
He warned Wat his wife was to blame,
That her head-dress was worth a mark and his hood worth a groat.
He charged merchants to chasten their children,
Let them lack no respect, while they are young.
He prayed priests and prelates together,
What they preach to the people to prove it in themselves —
"And live as ye teach us, we will love you the better."
And then he advised the orders their rule to obey —
"Lest the king and his council abridge your supplies,
And be steward in your stead, till ye be better ordered.
And ye that seek St. James, and saints at Rome,
Seek me Saint Truth, for He can save you all;
Qui cum patre et filio, fare you well!"
Then ran Repentance and rehearsed this theme,
And made William to weep water with his eyes.

Pride Pernel Proud-heart flung herself on the ground,
And lay long ere she looked up, and to Our Lady cried,
And promised to Him who all of us made
She would unsew her smock, and wear instead a hair shirt
To tame her flesh with, that frail was to sin:
"Shall never light heart seize me, but I shall hold me down
And endure to be slandered as I never did before.
And now I can put on meekness, and mercy beseech
Of all of whom I have had envy in my heart."

Lust Lecher said "Alas!" and to Our Lady cried
To win for him mercy for his misdeeds,
Between God himself and his poor soul,
Provided that he should on Saturday, for seven years,
Drink but with the duck and dine but once.

Envy Envy, with heavy heart, asketh after shrift,
And greatly his guiltiness beginneth to show.
Pale as a pellet, in a palsy he seemed,
Clothed in a coarse cloth, I could him not describe;
A kirtle and a short cloak, a knife by his side;
Of a friar's frock were the fronts of his sleeves.
As a leek that had lain long in the sun
So looked he with lean cheeks; foully he frowned.
His body was swollen; for wrath he bit his lips.
Wrathfully he clenched his fist, he thought to avenge himself
With works or with words, when he saw his time.
"Venom, or varnish, or vinegar, I trow,
Boils in my belly, or grows there, I ween.
Many a day could I not do as a man ought,
Such wind in my belly welleth ere I dine.

I have a neighbor nigh me, I have annoyed him oft,
Blamed him behind his back, to bring him in disgrace,
Injured him by my power, punished him full oft,
Belied him to lords, to make him lose silver,
Turned his friends to foes, with my false tongue;
His grace and his good luck grieve me full sore.
Between him and his household I have made wrath;
Both his life and his limb were lost through my tongue.
When I met in the market him I most hate,
I hailed him as courteously as if I were his friend.
He is doughtier than I, I dare do him no harm.
But had I mastery and might, I had murdered him for ever!
When I come to the church, and kneel before the rood,
And should pray for the people, as the priest teacheth us,
Then I cry upon my knees that Christ give them sorrow
That have borne away my bowl and my broad sheet.
From the altar I turn mine eye and behold
How Henry hath a new coat, and his wife another;
Then I wish it were mine, and all the web with it.
At his losing I laugh, in my heart I like it;
But at his winning I weep, and bewail the occasion.
I deem that men do ill, yet I do much worse,
For I would that every wight in this world were my servant,
And whoso hath more than I, maketh my heart angry.
Thus I live loveless, like an ill-tempered dog,
That all my breast swelleth with the bitterness of my gall;
No sugar is sweet enough to assuage it at all,
Nor no remedy drive it from my heart;
If shrift then should sweep it out, a great wonder it were."

"Yes, surely," quoth Repentance, and advised him to good,
"Sorrow for their sins saveth full many."
"I am sorry," quoth Envy, "I am seldom other,
And that maketh me so mad, for I may not avenge me."

Covetousness

Then came Covetousness, I could not describe him,
So hungry and so hollow Sir Harvey looked.
He was beetle-browed with two bleared eyes,
And like a leathern purse flapped his cheeks;
In a torn tabard of twelve winters' age;
Unless a louse could leap, I can not believe
That she could wander on that walk, it was so threadbare.
"I have been covetous," quoth this Caitiff,
"I admit it here;
For some time I served Sim at 'The Oak'
And was his pledged apprentice, his profit to watch.
First I learned to lie, in a lesson or two,
And wickedly to weigh was my second lesson.
To Winchester and to Weyhill I went to the fair
With many kinds of merchandise, as my master bade;
But had not the grace of guile gone among my ware,
It had been unsold these seven year, so help me God!
Then I betook me to the drapers, my grammar to learn,
To draw the list[1] along, to make it seem longer.
Among these rich striped cloths learned I a lesson,
Pierced them with a pack-needle, and pleated them together,
Put them in a press, and fastened them therein
Till ten yards or twelve were drawn out to thirteen.
And my wife at Westminster, that woollen cloth made,
Spake to the spinners to spin it soft.
The pound that she weighed by, weighed a quarter more
Than my balance did, when I weighed true.
I bought her barley, she brewed it to sell;
Penny-ale and white perry, she poured it together,

[1] The edge of the cloth, in measuring.

For laborers and low folk, that work for their living.
The best in the bed-chamber lay by the wall,
Whoso tasted thereof bought it ever after,
A gallon for a groat, God wot, no less
When it came in cups. Such tricks I used.
Rose the retailer is her right name;
She hath been a huckster these eleven winters.
But I swear now soothly that soon will I quit,
And never wickedly weigh, nor false trade practise,
But wend to Walsingham, and my wife also,
And pray the Rood of Bromholm to bring me out of debt."
Gluttony Now beginneth the Glutton to go to the shrift,
And wanders churchwards, his shrift to tell,
Then Bet the brewster bade him good morrow,
And then she asked him whither he would go.
"To holy church," quoth he, "to hear mass,
Since I shall be shriven, and sin no more."
"I have good ale, gossip," quoth she; "Glutton, what say you?"
"Hast aught in thy purse," quoth he, "any hot spices?"
"Yea, Glutton, gossip," quoth she, "God wot, full good;
I have pepper and peony-seeds, and a pound of garlick,
A farthing worth of fennel-seed, for these fasting days."
Then goeth Glutton in, and great oaths after;
Cis the shoemaker's wife sat on the bench,
Wat the ward of the warren, and his wife both,
Tomkin the tinker and twain of his servants;
Hick the hackney-man, and Hogg the needle seller,
Clarice of Cock's-Lane, and the clerk of the church,
Sir Piers of Prie-Dieu, and Pernel of Flanders,
Dawe the ditcher, and a dozen others.
A fiddler, a rat-catcher, a scavenger of Cheapside,
A rope-maker, a riding-boy, and Rose the dish-maker,
Godfrey of Garlickshire, and Griffin the Welshman,
And of tradesmen a band, early in the morning
Stand Glutton, with good-will, a treat in good ale.
Then Clement the cobbler cast off his cloak,
And at "the new fair" made offer to barter it;
And Hick the ostler flung his hood after,
And bade Bett the butcher act on his behalf.
Then were chapmen chosen, the articles to value;
Whoso had the hood should have something to boot.
They rose up rapidly, and whispered together,
And appraised the penny-worths, and parted them by themselves;
There were oaths a-plenty, whoso might hear them.
They could not, in conscience, accord together,
Till Robin the rope-maker was chosen to arise,
And named for an umpire, to avoid all debate,
For he should appraise the pennyworths, as seemed good to him.
Then Hick the ostler had the cloak,
On condition that Clement should have his cup filled,
And have Hick the ostler's hood, and hold him well served;
And he that first repented should straight arise
And greet Sir Glutton with a gallon of ale.
There was laughing and cheating[1] and "Let go the cup!"
Bargains and beverages began to arise,
And they sat so till evensong, and sang some while,
Till Glutton had gulped down a gallon and a gill.

. . . . . .

He had no strength to stand, till he his staff had;
Then 'gan he to go like a gleeman's bitch,
Sometimes to the side, sometimes to the rear,
Like a man laying lines to catch birds with.

[1] A *lotering*; B *louryng*; C *lakeryng*.

When he drew to the door, then his eyes grew dim,
He stumbled at the threshold, and threw to the ground.
Clement the cobbler caught Glutton by the middle,
And to lift him up he laid him on his knees;
And Glutton was a great churl, and grim in the lifting,
And coughed up a caudle in Clement's lap,
That the hungriest hound in Hertfordshire
Durst not lap that loathsomeness, so unlovely it smacketh;
So that, with all the woe in the world, his wife and his wench
Bore him home to his bed, and brought him therein.
And after all this surfeit, a sickness he had,
That he slept Saturday and Sunday, till sun went to rest.
Then he waked from his winking, and wiped his eyes;
The first word that he spake was, "Where is the cup?"
His wife warned him then, of wickedness and sin.
Then was he ashamed, that wretch, and scratched his ears,
And 'gan to cry grievously, and great dole to make
For his wicked life, that he had lived.
"For hunger or for thirst, I make my vow,
Shall never fish on Friday digest in my maw,
Till Abstinence, my aunt, have given me leave;
And yet I have hated her all my life-time."
Sloth Sloth for sorrow fell down swooning,
Till *Vigilate*, the watcher, fetched water to his eyes,
Let it flow on his face, and fast to him cried,
And said, "Beware of despair, that will thee betray.
'I am sorry for my sins,' say to thyself,
And beat thyself on the breast, and pray God for grace,
For there is no guilt so great that His mercy is not more."
Then Sloth sat up and sighed sore,
And made a vow before God, for his foul sloth,
"There shall be no Sunday this seven year (save sickness it cause)
That I shall not bring myself ere day to the dear church,
And hear matins and mass, as I a monk were.
No ale after meat shall withhold me thence,
Till I have heard evensong, I promise by the rood.
And[1] yet I shall yield again — if I have so much —
All that I wickedly won, since I had wit.
And though I lack a livelihood I will not stop
Till each man shall have his own, ere I hence wend:
And with the residue and the remnant, by the rood of Chester,
I shall seek Saint Truth, ere I see Rome!"
Robert the robber, on *Reddite*[2] he looked,
And because there was not wherewith, he wept full sore.
But yet the sinful wretch said to himself:
"Christ, that upon Calvary on the cross died'st,
Though Dismas[3] my brother besought grace of thee,
And thou hadst mercy on that man for *memento*[4] sake,
Thy will be done upon me, as I have well deserved
To have hell for ever if no hope there were.
So rue on me, Robert, that no counsel have,
Nor ever ween to win by any craft that I know.
But, for thy much mercy, mitigation I beseech;
Damn me not on Doomsday because I did so ill."
But what befell this felon, I cannot well show,
But well I know he wept hard, water with his eyes,
And acknowledged his guilt to Christ again thereafter,
That the pikestaff of Penitence he should polish anew,
And leap with it o'er the land, all his life-time,

[1] Ll. 236–259, dealing with the restitution of stolen goods, appear in C in connection with Avarice. The attaching of them to Sloth in A and B seems to point to some confusion in the text. Note that in A the sin of Wrath is omitted.
[2] Make restitution, *Romans*, xiii, 7.
[3] The name given to the penitent thief in the apocryphal *Gospel of Nicodemus*.
[4] Remember me, *Luke*, xxiii, 42.

For he hath lain by *Latro*,[1] Lucifer's brother.
A thousand of men then throng together,
Weeping and wailing for their wicked deeds,
Crying up to Christ, and to His clean Mother,
To give grace to seek Saint Truth, God grant they so might!

PASSUS VI

Now ride these folk, and walk on foot
To seek that saint in strange lands.
But there were few men so wise that knew the way thither,
But they bustled forth like beasts, over valleys and hills,
For while they went after their own will, they went all amiss;
Till it was late and long, when they a man met,
Apparelled as a palmer, in pilgrim's weeds.
He bore a staff bound round with a broad list[2]
In woodbine wise twisted around.
A bag and a bowl he bore by his side;
A hundred vials on his hat were set,
Signs of Sinai and shells of Galicia;
Many a cross on his cloak, and the keys of Rome,
And the vernicle in front, that men should him know,
And see by his signs whom he had sought.[3]
These folk asked him fairly from whence he came.
"From Sinai," he said, "and from the Sepulchre;
From Bethlehem and Babylon, I have been in both;
In India and in Assisi, and in many other places.
Ye may see by my signs that sit on my hat
That I have walked full wide, in wet and in dry,
And sought good saints for my soul's health."
"Knowest thou a holy one men call Saint Truth?
Canst thou show us the way to where he dwelleth?"
"Nay, so God gladden me," said the man then,
"Saw I never palmer, with pikestaff nor with scrip,
Such a saint seek, save now in this place."
"Peter!" quoth a Plowman, and put forth his head,
"I know him as naturally as a scholar doth his books;
Clean Conscience and Wit showed me to his place,
And pledged me then to serve him for ever.
Both in sowing and in setting, while I work might,
I have been his fellow these fifteen winters;
Have both sowed his seed and tended his beasts,
And also cared for his corn and carried it to house,
Ditched and delved, and done what he ordered,
Within and without watched his interests;
Among these people is no laborer whom he loves more,
For though I say it myself, my service him pleases.
I have my hire of him well, and sometimes more;
He is the promptest payer that poor men have;
He withholds from no kind his hire that he hath it not at even.
He is as lowly as a lamb, lovely of speech;
And if ye will wit where he dwelleth
I will show you the way home to his place."
"Yea, dear Piers," said these palmers, and proffered him hire.
"Nay, by the peril of my soul," quoth Piers, and began to swear,
"I would not finger a farthing, for St. Thomas's shrine!
Truth would love me the less for a great while after!
But, ye that wend to him, this is the way thither:
Ye must go through Meekness, both man and wife,
Till ye come to Conscience, that Christ may know the truth
That ye love him dearer than the life in your hearts,
And then your neighbors next in no wise injure
Otherwise than thou wouldest that men should do to thee.

[1] The word used in *Luke* of the crucified thieves.
[2] Edge of cloth.
[3] The references here are to the badges showing the shrines a pilgrim had visited: the vial or ampulla for Thomas of Canterbury; the scallop shell for St. James of Compostella in Galicia; the cross for Palestine; the keys and the handkerchief of St. Veronica for Rome. "Sinai" refers to the shrine of St. Catharine there.

So bend your way by a brook, Be-obedient-in-speech,
Forth till ye find a ford Honor-your-fathers;
Wade in that water, wash yourselves well there,
And ye shall leap the lightlier all your lifetime.
Soon shalt thou then see Swear-not-but-thou-have-need —
And-specially-not-in-vain-take-the-name-of-God-Almighty.
Then will ye come by a croft, but go ye not therein,
The croft called Covet-not-men's-cattle-nor-their-wives-
Nor-none-of-their-servants-that-they-might-be-hurt;
See thou break no bough there, unless it be thine own.
Two stocks there stand, but stay thou not there,
They are called Slay-not, Nor-steal-not; strike forth by them both;
Leave them on thy left hand, look thou not after them,
And hold well thy holy-day ever till even.
Then shalt thou turn aside at a brook, Bear-no-false-witness,
It is furnished within with florins, and with many oaths;
See thou pluck no plant there, for peril of thy soul.
Then shalt thou see Say-sooth, so-it-is-to-be-done-
And-look-that-thou-lie-not-for-any-man's-bidding.
Then shall thou come to a court, clear as the sun,
The moat is of Mercy, surrounding the manor,
And all the walls are of Wit to hold Will outside;
The battlements are of Christendom, mankind to save,
Buttressed [1] with the Belief wherethrough we must be saved.
All the houses are roofed, hall and chambers,
With no lead but Love-as-brethren-of-one-mother.
The tower wherein is Truth is set above the sun,
He may do with the daystar whatever he pleaseth.

[1] Lit., surmounted with wooden boardings, as in mediæval fortifications.

Death dare not do anything that he forbiddeth.
Grace is called the gate-guard, a good man in truth,
His man is called Amend-thou, for many men know him;
Tell him this as a token, for truth knows the sooth:
'I performed the penance that the priest enjoined me;
I am sorry for my sins, and so shall I ever be
When I think thereon, though I were a pope.'
Bid Amend-thou humble himself to his master once,
To lift up the wicket gate that the way shut
When Adam and Eve ate their bane; [2]
For he hath the key of the catch, though the king sleep.
And if Grace thee grant to go in in this wise,
Thou shalt see Truth himself sit in thy heart.
Then look that thou love Him well, and His law hold;
But be well aware of Wrath, that wicked wretch,
For he hath envy of Him that in thine heart sitteth,
And putteth forth Pride to praise thyself.
Boldness in thy good deeds blindeth thine eyes;
And so art thou driven out and the door closed,
Locked and fastened to keep thee thereout,
Haply a hundred year ere thou again enter.
Thus mayst thou lose His love by thinking well of thyself,
But get it again by Grace and by no gift else.
And there are seven sisters that serve Truth ever,
And are porters at posterns that to the place belong.
The first is called Abstinence, and Humility the second,
Charity and Chastity are two full choice maidens,
Patience and Peace many people help,

[2] B *apples unrosted.*

Largess the lady leadeth in full many.
But whoso is sib to these sisters, so help me God!
Is wonderfully welcome and fairly received.
And, but ye be sib to some of these seven,
It is full hard, by my head, any of you all
To get entrance at that gate unless greater be the grace."
"By Christ," quoth a cut-purse, "I have no kin there!"
"Nor I," quoth an ape-warden, "for aught that I know!"
"Certain," quoth a waferseller, "knew I this for truth,
I should go no foot further, for any friar's preaching."
"Yes," quoth Piers the Plowman, and preached for their good,
"Mercy is a maiden there and hath might over all;
She is sib to all sinful men and her son also;
And through the help of these two (no other hope have thou,)
Thou mightest get grace there, so thou go betimes."

PASSUS VII

"This would be a wicked way, unless one had a guide
Who might follow us each step, that there we may come."
Quoth Perkin the plowman, "By Peter the apostle,
I have a half-acre to plow, by the highway;
Were it well plowed, then with you would I wend,
And show you the right way, till ye found truth."
"That would be a long delay," quoth a lady in a veil;
"What shall we women work at the while?"
"Some shall sew sacks, that the wheat spill not,
And ye wives that have wool, work on it fast,
Spin it speedily, spare not your fingers,
Unless it be a holy day, or else a holy eve.
Look out your linen, and labor thereon fast;
The needy and the naked, take heed how they lie,
And cast on them clothes against the cold, for so Truth willeth;
For I shall grant them livelihood, unless the land fail,
As long as I live, for our Lord of Heaven's love.
And ye, lovely ladies, with your long fingers,
That have silk and sendal,[1] sew when you have time
Chasubles for chaplains, and churches to honor;
And all manner of men that by meat live
Help him to work well that your food winneth."
"By Christ," quoth a knight then, "thou knowest us best!
Save one time truly, thus taught was I never!
But teach me," quoth the knight; "if I can plow,
I will help thee to labor while my life lasteth."
"By Saint Peter," quoth Piers, "since thou profferest so humbly
I shall work and sweat and sow for us both,
And also labor for thy love all my lifetime,
On condition that thou keep Holy Church and myself
From wasters and wicked men that would us destroy.
And go thou and hunt hardily hares and foxes,
Bears and bucks that break men's hedges,
And fetch thee home falcons fowls to kill;
For they come into my croft and crop my wheat."
Full courteously the knight conceived these words;
"By my power, Piers, I plight thee my troth,
To fulfill the bargain, while I may stand!"
"But yet one point," quoth Piers, "I shall pray thee no more;
Look thou trouble no tenant, unless Truth will assent:
And if poor men proffer you presents or gifts,
Take them not; peradventure you may them not deserve;
For thou shalt give them back again at one year's end,
In a place of sore peril that purgatory is called.
And beat thou not thy bondman, the better thou shalt speed,

[1] A thin silken stuff.

(And be thyself true of tongue, and lying tales hate;)
Unless it be wisdom or wit thy workmen to chastise.
Revel not with ribalds, hear not their tales,
And especially at meat such men eschew,
For they are the devil's Tale-Tellers, I let thee understand."
"I assent, by Saint James," said the knight then,
"To work by thy word, while my life endureth."
"And I shall apparel me," quoth Perkin, "in pilgrim's wise,
And wend with you the right way, till ye Truth find."
He cast on his clothes, clouted and mended,
His garters and his cuffs, to keep his nails from cold;
He hung a basket on his back, in stead of a scrip;
A bushel of bread-corn he bringeth therein:
"For I will sow it myself, and then with you wend.
For whoso helpeth me to plow, or do any sort of labor,
He shall have, by our Lord, the more hire in harvest,
And shall make merry with the corn, whoever begrudgeth.
And all kinds of craftsmen that can live with Truth,
I shall find them their food, if they faithfully live,
Save Jack the juggler, and Janet of the stews,
And Robert the ribald, for his filthy words.
Truth taught it me once, and bade me tell it further,
Deleantur de libro,[1] I should not deal with them,
Holy Church is bound from them no tithe to take;
Et cum justis non scribantur[2]
They have escaped by good luck;[3] may God amend them!"
Dame Work-when-there-is-time is the name of Piers's wife;
His daughter is called Do-right-so-or-thy-mother-will-beat-thee;
His son is called Suffer-thy-sovereigns-to-have-their-will-
And-judge-them-not,-for-if-thou-do-thou-shalt-dearly-pay-for-it.
"May God be with all, for so his word teacheth;
For now I am old and gray, and have of my own,
To penance and to pilgrimage I will pass with these others.
Therefore I will, ere I wend, write my testament.
In Dei nomine, amen. I make it myself.
He shall have my soul that best hath deserved it,
And defend it from the fiend, for so I believe,
Till I come to my account, as my creed me telleth,
To have release and remission on that rental I expect.
The church shall have my corpse, and keep my bones;
For of my corn and capital she craveth the tenth.
I paid her promptly, to save my soul from peril,
She is bound, I hope, to bear me in mind,
And remember me in her memory among all Christians.
My wife shall have what I won with truth, and no more,
And divide with my friends and my dear children;
For though I die this day my debts are cleared;
I bare home what I borrowed ere I to bed went:
And with the residue and the remnant, by the rood of Chester!
I will worship therewith Truth in my life,
And be his pilgrim at the plow, for poor men's sake.
My plough-foot[4] shall be my pikestaff and push at the roots,
And help my coulter to carve and close the furrows."
Now have Piers and the pilgrims to the plow gone,
To plow this half-acre help him full many.
Ditchers and delvers dug up the ridges;[5]
Therewith was Perkin pleased, and praised them gladly.

[1] "Let them be stricken out from the book [of the living]," *Psalms*, lxix, 28.
[2] "And let them not be written with the just." *Ibid.*
[3] A *Thei ben a-scaped good thrift.*
[4] A *plouh-pote* (*pote* = pusher). B *plow-fote*; C *plouh-fote*, plough-foot.
[5] Left unplowed.

Other workmen there were that wrought full many,
Each man in his manner made himself work;
And sum, to please Perkin, picked up the weeds.
At high prime[1] Perkin let the plough stand,
While he himself oversaw who had best wrought;
He should be hired thereafter, when harvest-time came.
Then sat some, and sang at the ale,
And helped him to plow with "Hey, trolly-lolly!"
"Now, by the Prince of Paradise," quoth Piers then in wrath,
"Unless ye rise the sooner and haste ye to work,
Shall no grain that here groweth gladden you at need,
And though ye die for lack of it, the devil take him that cares!"
Then were the rogues afraid and feigned themselves blind.
Some laid their legs across as such scoundrels can,
And complained to Piers, with such piteous words:
"For we have no limbs to labor with, our Lord we thank for it;
But we pray for you, Piers, and for your plow too,
That God of his grace our grain multiply,
And reward you for your alms that ye give us here!
For we may neither work nor sweat, such sickness us aileth."
"If it be truth that ye say," quoth Piers, "soon I shall spy it!
Ye be wasters, I wot, and Truth knows the sooth!
I am his old servant, and ought him to warn
What wasters in the world his workmen destroy.
Ye eat what they should eat that plough for us all;
But Truth shall teach you his team to drive,
Both to sow and to set, and save his produce,
Scare crows from his corn, and keep his beasts,
Or ye shall eat barley bread, and of the brook drink.

[1] Nine o'clock in the morning.

But if they be blind or broken-shanked, or bedridden lie,
They shall have as good as I, so help me God,
Till God of his grace cause them to arise.
Anchorites and hermits that keep to their cells
Shall have of my alms, all the while I live,
Enough each day at noon, but no more till tomorrow,
Lest the fiend and their flesh should defile their souls;
Once at noon is enough for him that no work doeth,
He abides in better state that tastes not too often."
Then wasters arose, and would have fought;
To Piers the Plowman one proffered his glove,
A Breton, a braggart, boasted himself also,
And bade him go hang with his plow, bald-headed wretch!
"For we will have of thy flour, willy nilly,
And take of thy meat when that us pleaseth,
And make us merry therewith, spite of thy face!"
Then Piers Plowman complained to the knight,
To guard him as agreed from cursed wretches,
From wasters that lie in wait winners to rob.
Courteously the knight, as his nature was,
Warned wasters and taught them to do better;
"Or ye shall pay dearly by the law, by the order that I bear!"
"I was not wont to work," quoth the waster, "I will not begin now!"
And recked little of the law, and less of the knight,
And counted Piers worth a pea, and his plow too,
And menaced him and his men, when they should next meet.
"Now by the peril of my soul," quoth Piers the Plowman,
"I shall punish you all for your proud words!"
And whooped after Hunger then, that heard him at once:
"Wreak me on these wasters," quoth Piers, "that this world rob!"

Hunger in haste seized waster by the maw,
And wrung him so by the belly that both his eyes watered,
And buffeted the Breton on both his cheeks;
He looked like a lantern all his life after.
He so beat the boys he nigh burst their ribs,
Had not Piers with a pease-loaf prayed him to cease;
And with a bag[1] of beans beat them both,
And hit Hunger therewith between his lips,
And he bled inwards a bowlful of gruel;
Had not the physician first forbidden him water
To moisten the barley-bread and the ground beans,
They had been dead by this day, and buried all warm.
Then rogues for fear flew to barns,
And laid on with flails, from morn till even,
So that Hunger was not hardy enough even to look up
For a potful of pease that Piers had made.
A band of hermits seized hold of spades,
And delved in dirt and dung to drive Hunger out.
Blind and bedridden were cured a thousand,
That lie as blind and as broken-legged
Upon a warm Sunday by the highway;
Hunger killed them with a hot cake.
Lame men's limbs were rendered lithe that time,
And they became herds, to keep Piers's beasts,
And prayed, for charity, with Piers to dwell,
All for craving of his corn, to cast out Hunger.
Piers was proud thereof, and put them in office,
And gave them meat and money, as they might deserve.
Then had Piers pity, and prayed Hunger to wend
Home to his own hearth,[2] and hold himself there forever.
"And yet I pray thee," quoth Piers, "ere thou pass hence,
With vagabonds and beggars what is best to do?
I wot well, when thou art gone, they will work full ill;
It is misfortune maketh them to be now so meek,
And for lack of food thus fast do they work;
And they are my blood brethren, for God bought us all.
Truth taught me once to love them each one,
And help them in all things, according as they need.
Yet would I know if thou knewest what were the best,
And how I might master them, and make them work."
"Hear now," quoth Hunger, "and hold it for wisdom.
Bold beggars and rascals that may earn their meal by work,
With hound-bread and horse-bread hold up their hearts,
And cheat them with bones[3] against swelling of their bellies;
And if the fellows grumble. bid them go work,
And they shall sup the sweeter when they have it deserved.
And if thou find any fellow that fortune hath harmed
With fire or with false folk, try such to know;
Comfort them with thy means, for Christ of heaven's love.
Love them and lend to them, so the law of nature wills.
And all manner of men, that thou mayest spy,
That are needy, or naked, and nought have to spend,
With meat or with money make them fare the better,
With word or with work while thou art here.
Make friends with such, for so Saint Matthew teacheth,
Facite vobis amicos de mammona iniquitatis."[4]
"I would not grieve God," quoth Piers, "for all the gold on ground;
Might I do as thou sayest without sin?" said Piers then.
"Yea, I promise thee," quoth Hunger, "or else the Bible lieth;
Go to Genesis the giant, the engenderer of us alle;

[1] A *bat.* [2] A *hurde*, earth; B *erde*; C *erthe.*

[3] A *bamme hem with bones*; B *abate him with benes*; C *a-bane hem with benes.*

[4] Make for yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, *Luke*, xvi, 9.

'In sweat and swink thou shalt earn thy meat,[1]
And labor for thy livelihood,' for so our lord ordered.
And Sapience said the same, I saw it in the Bible.
'*Piger propter frigus*,[2] no field he till,
He shall crave and beg, and no man abate his hunger.'
Matthew of the man's face[3] uttereth these words,
'The unprofitable servant had a talent, and because he would not use it
He had ill-will of his master evermore after';
Auferte ab illo unam, et date illi, etc.,[4]
He took from him his talent, for he would not work,
And gave it in haste to him that had ten before;
And afterwards he thus said, his servants it heard,
'He that hath shall have, to help where need is,
And he that hath not, nought shall have, nor no man help him;
And he that hopeth to have, from him it shall be taken away.'
For Common Sense would that each man should work,
By teaching or by tillage, or travailing with hands,
Active life or contemplative; Christ would so also.
For so saith the Psalter, in the psalm beginning, 'Blessed is everyone,'
Labores manum tuarum quia manducabis, etc.[5]
To him that gets his food here, with travailing in truth,
God gives his blessing, for his livelihood that laboreth."
"Yet I pray thee," quoth Piers, "for charity, if thou knowest
Any leaf of leechcraft, let me learn it, my dear.
For some of my servants are sick at times,
Work not for a week, so acheth their belly."
"I wot well," quoth Hunger, "what sickness aileth them;
They have eaten in excess, that maketh them groan oft.
But I command thee," quoth Hunger, "if health thou desirest,
That on no day thou drink till thou hast had some dinner;
Eat not, I command thee, till Hunger take thee
And send thee some of his sauce, the better to savor;
Keep some till supper-time, and sit not too long,
Arise up ere appetite have eaten his fill.
Let not Sir Surfeit sit at thy board;
Love him not, for he is a lecher, and lewd of tongue,
And after many meats his maw is a-longing.
And if thou diet thyself thus, I dare bet both mine ears
That Physic shall his furred hood for his food sell,
And eke his Calabrian[6] cloak with buttons of gold,
And be fain, by my faith, his physic to leave,
And learn to labor on the land, lest livelihood fail.
There are more liars than leeches, our Lord them amend!
They do men to death by their drink, ere destiny would."
"By Saint Paul," quoth Piers, "these be profitable words!
This is a lovely lesson; our Lord reward thee for it!
Away now when thou wilt; be it well with thee ever!"
"I promise thee," quoth Hunger, "hence will I not wend
Ere I have dined this day, and drunk too."
"I have no penny," quoth Piers, "pullets to buy,
Neither geese nor pigs, but two green[7] cheeses.
And a little curds and cream, and unleavened cake,
And a loaf of beans and bran, baked for my children.
And I say, by my soul, I have no salt bacon,
Nor any cook-boys, by Christ, collops to make.

[1] *Genesis*, iii, 19.
[2] The slothful shall not plow by reason of the winter, *Proverbs*, xx, 4.
[3] "An allusion to a common representation of the evangelists which likens Matthew to a *man*, Mark to a *lion*, Luke to a *bull*, and John to an *eagle*." Skeat.
[4] Take ye away the talent from him, and give to him, etc. *Matthew*, xxv, 28.
[5] For thou shalt eat the labor of thine hands, *Psalms*, cxxviii, 2.
[6] Trimmed with grey Calabrian fur.
[7] Fresh made.

But I have onions and parsley, and many cabbages,
And eke a cow and a calf, and a cart-mare
To draw a-field my dung, while the drought lasteth.
By these means must I live till Lammas time;
By that time I hope to have harvest in my croft;
Then may I prepare thee dinner as thou dearly likest it."
All the poor people pease-cods fetched,
Beans baked into bread they brought in their laps,
Little onions their chief meat, and ripe cherries many,
And proffered Piers this present, to please his hunger with.
Hunger ate this in haste, and asked after more.
Then these folk for fear fetched him many
Onions and pease, for they him would please;
After these were eaten, he must take his leave
Till it was near to harvest, when new corn came to market.
Then were these folk fain, and fed Hunger eagerly
With good ale and gluttony, and caused him to sleep.
And then would not the waster work, but wandered about,
Nor any beggar eat bread that had beans in it,
But cocket and clearmatin,[1] and of clean wheat;
Nor any halfpenny ale in any wise drink,
But of the best and the brownest that brewers sell.
Laborers that have no land to live by, but only their hands,
Deign not to dine today on yesterday's vegetables.
No penny-ale may please them, nor a piece of bacon,
Unless it were fresh flesh, or else fried fish,
Hot and very hot, lest they chill their stomachs.
Unless he be hired at a high price, he will surely chide,
Call curses on the time that he was made a workman,
And curse the king hard, and all his council after
For enforcing such laws as chastise laborers.
But while Hunger was master here there would none chide
Nor strive against the statutes, so stern they looked.
I warn you all, workmen, win while ye may;
Hunger hitherward again hieth him in haste.
He will awake with high-waters[2] the wasters all;
Ere five years are fulfilled, such famine shall arise,
Through floods and foul weather fruits shall fail;
And so saith Saturn, and sendeth us warning.

[1] Kinds of fine bread.

PASSUS VIII

Truth heard tell hereof, and to Piers sent
To take his team, and till the earth;
And purchased him a pardon *a poena et a culpa*,[3]
For him and for his heirs, for evermore after.
And bade him stay at home, and plow his leas,
And all that ever helped him, to plow or to sow,
Or any kind of task that might Piers help,
Part in that pardon the Pope hath granted.
Kings and knights that guard Holy Church,
And rightfully rule the realm and the people,
Have pardon through Purgatory to pass full soon,
With patriarchs in Paradise to play thereafter.
Bishops that bless, and both the laws[4] know,
Look on the one law and teach men the other,
And bear them both on their backs, as their banner showeth,
And preach to their parsons the peril of sin,
How their scabbed sheep shall their wool save,
Have pardon with the Apostles when they pass hence,
And at the Day of Doom with them on daïs sit.
Merchants, in the margin, had many years' remission,

[2] Floods. [3] From punishment and guilt.
[4] Duty to God and duty to man.

But not *a poena et a culpa* would the Pope them grant.
Because they hold not their holy-day as Holy Church teacheth,
And because they swore by their souls — "so help them God!" —
Against their clean conscience, their goods to sell.
But under his secret seal Truth sent a letter,
And bade them buy boldly what they liked best,
And then sell it again, and save the winning,
And make *maison-dieux*[1] therewith, the sick to help,
And wicked customs vigorously amend;
Build again bridges that broken were,
Help to marry maidens or make them nuns;
Poor widows that would not be wives again,
Find such their food, for love of God of heaven;
Let scholars to school, or to some other craft,
Assist[2] religion, and endow it better;
"And I shall send you myself Saint Michael, my angel,
That no devil shall harm you, when you shall die,
And hinder me from sending your souls safe into heaven,
And before the face of my father prepare your seats.
Usury and avarice and oaths I forbid,
That no guile go with you, but the grace of truth."
Then were merchants merry, they wept for joy,
And give Will for his writing woolen clothes;
Because he copied thus their clause, they gave him great thanks.
Men of law had least, for they are loath
To plead for mean men, unless they get money;
So saith the Psalter and Sapience also.
Super innocentes munera non accipiunt. A regibus et principibus erit merces eorum.[3]
From princes and prelates their pension should come,
And from the poor people no pennyworth should they take.

But he that spendeth his speech, and speaketh for the poor man,
Who is innocent and needy, and no man hath harmed,
That comforteth him in misfortune, coveteth not his goods,
But, for our Lord's love, law for him showeth,
No devil, at his death-day, shall harm him a mite,
That he be not secure and safe; and so saith the Psalter.
Qui facit haec, non movebitur in eternum.[4]
But to buy water, or wind, or wit (the third thing),
Holy Writ would never grant, God knows the truth!
These three as thralls have grown among us all,
To wax or to wane, whichever God liketh.
His pardon in purgatory is petty, I trow,
Who any pay from poor men for pleading receiveth.
Ye lawmakers and lawyers, ye know whether I lie;
Since ye see that it is so, serve at your best.
Living laborers, that live by their hands,
That truly give and truly pay their tithes
And live in love and in law for their lowly hearts,
Had the same absolution that sent was to Piers.
Askers and beggars are not in the bull,
Unless the suggestion be sound that causes them to beg.
For he that beggeth or asketh, unless he have need,
He is false as the fiend, and defraudeth the needy,
And also beguileth the giver, all against his will.
They live not in love, nor any law keep;
They wed no women that they have to do with;
But as wild beasts wickedly work together,
And bring forth bairns that bastards are held.
Either their backs or their bones they break in their youth,
And go begging with their children evermore after.
There are more misshapen among them, whoso takes heed,

[1] Hospitals. [2] A *Rule;* B C *Releue.*
[3] *Psalms*, xv, 9.
[4] He that doeth these things shall never be moved, *Psalms*, xv, 5.

Than of all other men that in the world wander.
They that live their life thus may loath the time
That ever they were created men, when they shall hence fare.
But old men and hoary, that helpless are in strength,
And women with child, that cannot work,
The blind and bedridden, with broken limbs,
That take sickness meekly, like lepers and others,
Have as full pardon as the Plowman himself;
For love of their humble hearts our Lord hath them granted
Their penance and their purgatory to have here upon earth.
"Piers," quoth a priest then, "thy pardon must I read,
For I will construe every clause, and know it in English."
And Piers, at his prayer, the pardon unfoldeth,
And I, behind them both, beheld all the bull.
In two lines it lay, and not a letter more,
And was written right thus, in witness of truth:
Et qui bona egerunt, ibunt in viam eternam; Qui vero mala, in ignem eternum.[1]
"Peter!" quoth the priest then, "I can no pardon find,
But 'Do well and have well, and God shall have thy soul;
And do evil and have evil, hope thou none other
But that after thy death-day to hell shalt thou wend!'"
And Piers, for pure vexation, pulled it asunder,
And then he said to them these seemly sayings:
"*Si ambulavero in medio umbrae mortis, non timebo mala, quoniam tu mecum es.*[2]
I shall cease from my sowing," said Piers, "and work not so hard,
Nor about my livelihood so busy be more!
In prayer and in penance my plowing shall be hereafter,
And lower where I laughed, ere my life fail.
The prophet his bread ate in penance and weeping;
As the Psalter says to us, so did many others;
Who loveth God loyally, his livelihood is plentiful:
Fuerunt mihi lacrimae meae panes, die ac nocte.[3]
And, unless Luke lies, he teacheth us another,
That too busy we should not be, here upon earth,
While we dwell in this world, to make glad the belly.
Ne soliciti sitis,[4] he saith in his gospel,
And showeth it by example our souls to guide.
The fowls in the firmament, who feedeth them in winter?
When the frost freezeth, food they require;
They have no granary to go to, yet God gives them all."
"What?" quoth the priest to Perkin, "by Peter! as methinketh,
Thou art lettered a little; who taught thee to read?"
"Abstinence the abbess mine A B C me taught,
And Conscience came after and showed me better."
"Were thou a priest," quoth he, "thou mightest preach when thou couldst;
'*Quoniam literaturam non cognovi,*'[5] might be thy theme!"
"Lewd losel!" quoth he, "little lookest thou on the Bible,
Solomon's sayings seldom thou beholdest;
'Sling away these scorners,' he saith, 'with their vile scolding,
For with them readily I care not to rest;'
Ejice derisores et jurgia cum eis, ne crescant."[6]
The priest and Perkin then disputed together,
And through their words I awoke, and waited about,
And saw the sun in the south just at that time.
Meatless and moneyless on Malvern hills,
Musing on this dream, a mile length I went.

[1] And those who did good shalt go into eternal life; but who did evil, into eternal fire. Cf. *Matthew*, xxv, 46.

[2] Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me, *Psalms*, xxiii, 4.

[3] My tears have been my meat day and night, *Psalms*, xlii, 3.

[4] Be not anxious, etc., *Matthew*, vi, 25.

[5] For I have known no learning, *Psalms*, lxxi, 15 (Vulgate).

[6] *Proverbs*, xxii, 10 (translated in previous lines).

Many a time this dream has made me to study
For love of Piers the Plowman, full pensive in my heart;
For it I saw sleeping, if such a thing might be.
But Cato construeth it nay, and the canon-lawyers too,
And say themselves, "*Somnia ne cures.*"[1]
But as for the Bible, bear witness how
Daniel divined the dreams of a king,
Whom Nebuchadnezzar[2] these clerks name.
Daniel said, "Sir King, thy dream means
That strange knights shall come thy kingdom to claim;
Among lower lords thy land shall be divided."
As Daniel divined, it fell out indeed after,
The king lost his lordship, and lesser men it had.
And Joseph dreamed dreams, full marvelous also,
How the sun and the moon and eleven stars
Fell before his feet and saluted him all.
"*Beau fils*," quoth his father, "for famine we shall,
I myself and my sons, seek thee in need."
It fell out as the father said, in Pharaoh's time,
Where Joseph was justice, Egypt to keep.
All this maketh me on dreams to think
Many a time at midnight, when men should sleep,
On Piers the plowman, and what sort of pardon he had,
And how the priest impugned it, all by pure reason,
And divined that Do-well surpassed an indulgence,
Bienals and trienals[3] and bishops' letters.
Do-well on doomsday is worthily praised,
He surpasseth all the pardons of St. Peter's church.
Now hath the Pope power pardon to grant,
The people without penance to pass into joy.

[1] Take no heed of dreams, Dionysius Cato, *Distich*, ii, 31.
[2] Really Belshazzar, as Skeat shows. *Daniel*, v, 28.
[3] Masses for the dead said for two and three years.

This is a part of our belief as learned men teach us,
Quodcunque ligaveris super terram, erit ligatum et in coelis.[4]
And so believe I loyally (our Lord forbid I should other)
That pardon and penance and prayers do save
Souls that have sinned seven times deadly.
But to trust to trienals truly methinketh
Is not so secure for the soul, certes, as Do-well.
Therefore I counsel you men that are rich on earth,
Trusting by your treasure trienals to have,
Be ye none the bolder to break the ten commandments.
And especially ye mayors, and ye master judges,
That have the wealth of this world, and for wise men are held,
To purchase pardon and the Pope's bulls,
At the dreadful day of doom, when the dead shall arise
And come all before Christ, and accounts yield
How thou leddest thy life, and his law keptest,
What thou didst day by day, the doom will rehearse;
A pouchful of pardon there, with provincial letters,
Though thou be found in fraternity among the four orders,
And have indulgence doubled, unless Do-well thee help,
I would not give for thy pardon one pie-heel!
Therefore I counsel all Christians to cry Christ mercy,
And Mary his mother to be their intercessor,
That God give us grace, ere we go hence,
Such works to work, while we are here,
That after our death-day, Do-well rehearse,
At the day of doom, that we did as he us told.

Explicit hic Visio Willelmi de Petro de Ploughman.

[4] What things soever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, *Matthew*, xviii, 18.

JOHN GOWER

THE TALE OF FLORENT[1]

(*Confessio Amantis*, bk. 1, l. 1407)

THER was whilom be daies olde
A worthi knyht, and as men tolde
He was nevoeu to themperour
And of his court a courteour:
Wifles he was, Florent he hihte;
He was a man that mochel myhte;[2]
Of armes he was desirous,
Chivalerous and amorous;
And for the fame of worldes speche,
Strange aventures forto seche,
He rod the Marches al aboute.
And fell a time, as he was oute,
Fortune, which may every thred
Tobreke and knette of mannes sped,[3]
Schop,[4] as this knyht rod in a pas,[5]
That he be strengthe take was,
And to a castell thei him ladde,
Wher that he fewe frendes hadde:
For so it fell that ilke stounde
That he hath with a dedly wounde
Feihtende[6] his oghne hondes slain
Branchus, which to the Capitain
Was sone and heir, wherof ben wrothe
The fader and the moder bothe.
That knyht Branchus was of his hond
The worthieste of al his lond,
And fain thei wolden do vengance
Upon Florent; bot remembrance
That thei toke of his worthinesse
Of knyhthod and of gentilesse,
And how he stod of cousinage
To themperour, made hem assuage,
And dorsten noght slen him for fere:
In gret desputeisoun thei were
Among hemself, what was the beste.
Ther was a lady, the slyheste
Of alle that men knewe tho,
So old sche myhte unethes go,[7]
And was grantdame unto the dede:[8]
And sche with that began to rede,
And seide how sche wol bringe him inne,
That sche schal him to dethe winne
Al only of his oghne grant,
Thurgh strengthe of verray covenant
Withoute blame of eny wiht.
Anon sche sende for this kniht,
And of hire sone sche alleide[9]
The deth, and thus to him sche seide:
'Florent, how so thou be to wyte[10]
Of Branchus deth, men schal respite
As now to take vengement,
Be so thou stonde in juggement
Upon certein condicioun,
That thou unto a questioun
Which I schal axe schalt ansuere;
And over this thou schalt ek swere,
That if thou of the sothe faile,
Ther schal non other thing availe,
That thou ne schalt thi deth receive.
And for men schal the noght deceive,
That thou therof myht ben advised,
Thou schalt have day and tyme assised
And leve saufly forto wende,
Be so that at thi daies ende
Thou come ayein with thin avys.'
This knyht, which worthi was and wys,
This lady preith that he may wite,
And have it under seales write,
What questioun it scholde be
For which he schal in that degree
Stonde of his lif in jeupartie.
With that sche feigneth compaignie,[11]
And seith: 'Florent, on love it hongeth
Al that to myn axinge longeth:
What alle wommen most desire
This wole I axe, and in thempire
Wher as thou hast most knowlechinge
Tak conseil upon this axinge.'
Florent this thing hath undertake,
The day was set, the time take,
Under his seal he wrot his oth,
In such a wise and forth he goth

[1] On the versions of this fine old story see G. H. Maynadier's *Wife of Bath's Tale* in the *Grimm Library*, London, 1901.

[2] who could perform much.
[3] Break asunder and restore again of man's luck.
[4] Brought it about.
[5] at a walk.
[6] We should supply "with."
[7] scarcely walk.
[8] So old that she was grandam to persons already dead.
[9] alleged.
[10] punish.
[11] friendliness.

Home to his emes[1] court ayein;
To whom his aventure plein
He tolde, of that him is befalle.
And upon that thei weren alle
The wiseste of the lond asent,[2]
Bot natheles of on assent
Thei myhte noght acorde plat,
On seide this, an othre that.
After the disposicioun
Of naturel complexioun[3]
To som womman it is plesance,
That to an other is grevance;
Bot such a thing in special,
Which to hem alle in general
Is most plesant, and most desired
Above alle othre and most conspired,
Such o thing conne thei noght finde
Be constellacion ne kinde:
And thus Florent withoute cure
Mot stonde upon his aventure,
And is al schape unto the lere,[4]
As in defalte of his answere.
This knyht hath levere forto dye
Than breke his trowthe and forto lye
In place ther as he was swore,
And schapth him gon ayein therfore.
Whan time cam he tok his leve,
That lengere wolde he noght beleve,
And preith his em he be noght wroth,
For that is a point of his oth,
He seith, that noman schal him wreke,
Thogh afterward men hiere speke
That he par aventure deie.
And thus he wente forth his weie
Alone as knyht aventurous,
And in his thoght was curious
To wite what was best to do:
And as he rod al one so,
And cam nyh ther he wolde be,
In a forest under a tre
He syh wher sat a creature,
A lothly wommannysch figure,
That forto speke of fleisch and bon
So foul yit syh he nevere non.
This knyht behield hir redely,
And as he wolde have passed by,
Sche cleped him and bad abide;
And he his horse heved aside,
Tho torneth, and to hire he rod,
And there he hoveth[5] and abod,
To wite what sche wolde mene.
And sche began him to bemene,
And seide: 'Florent be thi name,
Thou hast on honde such a game,
That bot thou be the betre avised,
Thi deth is schapen and devised,
That al the world ne mai the save,
Bot if that thou my conseil have.'
Florent, whan he this tale herde,
Unto this olde wyht answerde
And of hir conseil he hir preide.
And sche ayein to him thus seide:
'Florent, if I for the so schape,
That thou thurgh me thi deth ascape
And take worschipe of thi dede,
What schal I have to my mede?'
'What thing,' quod he, 'that thou wolt axe.'
'I bidde nevere a betre taxe,'[6]
Quod sche; 'bot ferst, er thou be sped,
Thou schalt me leve such a wedd,[7]
That I wol have thi trowthe in honde
That thou schalt be myn housebonde.'
'Nay,' seith Florent, 'that may noght be.'
'Ryd thanne forth thi wey,' quod sche,
'And if thou go withoute red,
Thou schalt be sekerliche ded.'
Florent behihte hire good ynowh
Of lond, of rente, of park, of plowh,
Bot al that compteth sche at noght.
Tho fell this knyht in mochel thoght;
Now goth he forth, now comth ayein,
He wot noght what is best to sein,
And thoghte, as he rode to and fro,
That chese he mot on of the tuo —
Or forto take hire to his wif
Or elles forto lese his lif.
And thanne he caste his avantage,
That sche was of so gret an age,
That sche mai live bot a while,
And thoghte put hire in an ile,
Wher that noman hire scholde knowe,
Til sche with deth were overthrowe.
And thus this yonge lusti knyht
Unto this olde lothly wiht
Tho seide: 'If that non other chance
Mai make my deliverance,
Bot only thilke same speche
Which, as thou seist, thou schalt me teche,
Have hier myn hond, I schal thee wedde.'
And thus his trowthe he leith to wedde.
With that sche frounceth[8] up the browe:
'This covenant I wol allowe,'
Sche seith: 'if eny other thing
Bot that thou hast of my techyng

[1] uncle's. Ger. Oheim.
[2] sent for.
[3] disposition.
[4] prepared for the loss.
[5] delays.
[6] I ask no better engagement.
[7] pledge. Cf. *wedlock*, i.e. pledged state.
[8] wrinkles.

Fro deth thi body mai respite,
I woll thee of thi trowthe acquite,
And elles be non other weie.
Now herkne me what I schal seie.
Whan thou art come into the place,
Wher now thei maken gret manace
And upon thi comynge abyde,
Thei wole anon the same tide
Oppose[1] thee of thin answere.
I wot thou wolt nothing forbere
Of that thou wenest be thi beste,
And if thou myht so finde reste,
Wel is, for thanne is ther nomore.
And elles this schal be my lore,
That thou schalt seie, upon this molde
That alle wommen lievest wolde
Be soverein of mannes love:
For what womman is so above,
Sche hath, as who seith, al hire wille;
And elles may sche noght fulfille
What thing hir were lievest have.
With this answere thou schalt save
Thiself, and other wise noght.
And whan thou hast thin ende wroght,
Come hier ayein, thou schalt me finde,
And let nothing out of thi minde.'
He goth him forth with hevy chiere,
As he thàt not in what manere
He mai this worldes joie atteigne:
For if he deie, he hath a peine,
And if he live, he mot him binde
To such on which of alle kinde
Of wommen is thunsemlieste:
Thus wot he noght what is the beste:
Bot be him lief or be him loth,
Unto the castell forth he goth
His full answere for to yive,
Or forto deie or forto live.
Forth with his conseil cam the lord,
The thinges stoden of record,
He sende up for the lady sone,
And forth sche cam, that olde mone.[2]
In presence of the remenant
The strengthe of al the covenant
Tho was reherced openly,
And to Florent sche bad forthi
That he schal tellen his avis,
As he that woot what is the pris.
Florent seith al that evere he couthe,
Bot such word cam ther non to mowthe,
That he for yifte or for beheste
Mihte eny wise his deth areste.
And thus he tarieth longe and late,
Til that this lady bad algate[3]

[1] Interrogate. [2] creature. [3] in any case.

That he schal for the dom final
Yive his answere in special
Of that sche hadde him ferst opposed:
And thanne he hath trewly supposed
That he him may of nothing yelpe,[4]
Bot if so be tho wordes helpe
Whiche as the womman hath him tawht;
Wherof he hath an hope cawht
That he schal ben excused so,
And tolde out plein his wille tho.
And whan that this matrone herde
The manere how this knyht ansuerde,
Sche seide: 'Ha treson, wo thee be,
That hast thus told the privite
Which alle wommen most desire!
I wolde that thou were afire.'
Bot natheles in such a plit
Florent of his answere is quit.
And tho began his sorwe newe,
For he mot gon, or ben untrewe,
To hire which his trowthe hadde.
Bot he, which alle schame dradde,
Goth forth in stede of his penance,
And takth the fortune of his chance,
As he that was with trowthe affaited.[5]
This olde wyht him hath awaited
In place wher as he hire lefte:
Florent his wofull heved[6] uplefte
And syh this vecke[7] wher sche sat,
Which was the lothlieste what[8]
That evere man caste on his yhe:
Hire nase bass,[9] hire browes hyhe,
Hire yhen smale and depe set,
Hire chekes ben with teres wet,
And rivelen[10] as an emty skyn
Hangende doun unto the chin;
Hire lippes schrunken ben for age,
Ther was no grace in the visage,
Hir front was nargh,[11] hir lockes hore,
Sche loketh forth as doth a More,[12]
Hire necke is schort, hir schuldres courbe,[13]
That myhte a mannes lust destourbe,
Hire body gret and nothing smal,
And schortly to descrive hire al,
Sche hath no lith[14] withoute a lak;
Bot lich unto the wollesak
Sche proferth hire unto this knyht,
And bad him, as he hath behyht,
So as sche hath ben his warant,
That he hire holde covenant,
And be the bridel sche him seseth.
Bot Godd wot how that sche him pleseth

[4] boast, speak. [5] prepared. [6] head. [7] hag. [8] thing. [9] flat. [10] wrinkle. [11] low. [12] Moor. [13] bowed. [14] limb.

Of suche wordes as sche spekth:
Him thenkth welnyh his herte brekth
For sorwe that he may noght fle,
Bot if he wolde untrewe be.
Loke, how a sek man for his hele
Takth baldemoine [1] with canele,[2]
And with the mirre takth the sucre,
Ryht upon such a maner lucre [3]
Stant Florent, as in this diete:
He drinkth the bitre with the swete,
He medleth sorwe with likynge,
And liveth, as who seith,[4] deyinge;
His youthe schal be cast aweie
Upon such on which as the weie [5]
Is old and lothly overal.
Bot nede he mot that nede schal: [6]
He wolde algate his trowthe holde,
As every knyht therto is holde,
What happ so evere him is befalle
Thogh sche be the fouleste of alle,
Yet to thonour of wommanhiede
Him thoghte he scholde taken hiede;
So that for pure gentilesse,
As he hire couthe best adresce,
In ragges, as sche was totore,[7]
He set hire on his hors tofore
And forth he takth his weie softe;
No wonder thogh he siketh [8] ofte.
Bot as an oule [9] fleth be nyhte
Out of alle othre briddes syhte,
Riht so this knyht on daies brode
In clos him hield, and schop his rode
On nyhtes time, til the tyde
That he cam there he wolde abide;
And prively withoute noise
He bringth this foule grete coise [10]
To his castell in such a wise
That noman myhte hire schappe avise,
Til sche into the chambre cam:
Wher he his prive conseil nam
Of suche men as he most troste,
And tolde hem that he nedes moste
This beste wedde to his wif,
For elles hadde he lost his lif.
The prive wommen were asent,[11]
That scholden ben of his assent:
Hire ragges thei anon of drawe,
And, as it was that time lawe,
She hadde bath, sche hadde reste,
And was arraied to the beste.
Bot with no craft of combes brode
Thei myhte hire hore locks schode,[12]
And sche ne wolde noght be schore [13]
For no conseil, and thei therfore,
With such atyr as tho was used,
Ordeinen that it was excused,
And hid so crafteliche aboute,
That noman myhte sen hem oute.
Bot when sche was fulliche arraied
And hire atyr was al assaied,
Tho was sche foulere on to se:
Bot yit it may non other be,
Thei were wedded in the nyht;
So wo begon was nevere knyht
As he was thanne of mariage.
And sche began to pleie and rage,
As who seith, I am wel ynowh;
Bot he therof nothing ne lowh,[14]
For sche tok thanne chiere on honde
And clepeth him hire housebonde,
And seith, 'My lord, go we to bedde,
For I to that entente wedde,
That thou schalt be my worldes blisse:'
And profreth him with that to kisse,
As sche a lusti lady were.
His body myhte wel be there,
Bot as of thoght and of memoire
His herte was in purgatoire.
Bot yit for strengthe of matrimoine
He myhte make non essoine,[15]
That he ne mot algates plie [16]
To gon to bedde of compaignie:
And whan thei were abed naked,
Withoute slep he was awaked;
He torneth on that other side,
For that he wolde hise yhen hyde
Fro lokynge on that foule wyht.
The chambre was al full of lyht,
The courtins were of cendal [17] thinne;
This newe bryd which lay withinne,
Thogh it be noght with his acord,
In armes sche beclipte hire lord,
And preide, as he was torned fro,
He wolde him torne ayeinward tho;
'For now,' sche seith, 'we ben both on.'
And he lay still as eny ston,
Bot evere in on [18] sche spak and preide,
And bad him thenke on that he seide,
Whan that he tok hire be the hond.
He herde and understod the bond,
How he was set to his penance,
And as it were a man in trance
He torneth him al sodeinly,
And syh a lady lay him by
Of eyhtetiene wynter age,

[1] gentian. [2] cinnamon. [3] compensation. [4] so to speak. [5] road, common way. [6] he must needs who needs must. [7] all torn. [8] sigheth. [9] owl. [10] monster? [11] sent for. [12] part. [13] shorn. [14] laughed. [15] excuse. [16] submit. [17] silk. [18] continuously.

Which was the faireste of visage
That evere in al this world he syh:
And as he wolde have take hire nyh,
Sche put hire hand and be his leve,
Besoghte him that he wolde leve,
And seith that for to wynne or lese
He mot on of tuo thinges chese,
Wher[1] he wol have hire such on nyht,
Or elles upon daies lyht,
For he schal noght have bothe tuo.
And he began to sorwe tho,
In many a wise and caste his thoght,
Bot for al that yit cowthe he noght
Devise himself which was the beste.
And sche, that wolde his hertes reste,
Preith that he sholde chese algate,
Til ate laste longe and late
He seide: 'O ye, my lyves hele,
Sey what you list in my querele,
I not what ansuere I shal yive:
Bot evere whil that I may live,
I wol that ye be my maistresse,
For I can noght miselve gesse
Which is the beste unto my chois.
Thus grante I yow myn hole vois,
Ches for ous bothen, I you preie;
And what as evere that ye seie,
Riht as ye wole so wol I.'
'Mi lord,' sche seide, 'grant merci,
For of this word that ye now sein,
That ye have mad me soverein,
Mi destine is overpassed,
That never hierafter schal be lassed[2]
Mi beaute, which that I now have,
Til I be take into my grave;
Bot nyht and day as I am now
I schal alwey be such to yow.
The kinges dowhter of Cizile[3]
I am, and fell bot siththe[4] awhile,
As I was with my fader late,
That my stepmoder for an hate,
Which toward me sche hath begonne,
Forschop[5] me, til I hadde wonne
The love and sovereinete
Of what knyht that in his degre
Alle othre passeth of good name:
And, as men sein, ye ben the same,
The dede proeveth it is so;
Thus am I yours evermo.'
Tho was plesance and joye ynowh,
Echon with other pleide and lowh;
Thei live longe and wel thei ferde,
And clerkes that his chance herde
Thei writen it in evidence,
To teche how that obedience
Mai wel fortune a man to love
And sette him in his lust above,
As it befell unto this knyht.

[1] whether. [2] lessened. [3] Sicily. [4] since. [5] transformed.

TALE OF ALBINUS AND ROSEMUND[6]

(*Confessio Amantis*, bk. 1, l. 2459)

Of hem that we Lombars[7] now calle
Albinus was the ferste of alle
Which bar corone of Lombardie,
And was of gret chivalerie
In werre ayein diverse kinges.
So fell amonges othre thinges,
That he that time a werre hadde
With Gurmond, which the Geptes ladde,
And was a myhti kyng also:
Bot natheles it fell him so,
Albinus slowh him in the feld,
Ther halp him nowther swerd ne scheld,
That he ne smot his hed of thanne,
Wherof he tok awey the panne,[8]
Of which he seide he wolde make
A cuppe for Gurmoundes sake,
To kepe and drawe into memoire
Of his bataille the victoire.
And thus whan he the feld hath wonne,
The lond anon was overronne
And sesed in his oghne hond,
Wher he Gurmondes dowhter fond,
Which Maide Rosemounde hihte,
And was in every mannes sihte
A fair, a freissh, a lusti on.
His herte fell to hire anon,
And such a love on hire he caste,
That he hire weddeth ate laste;
And after that long time in reste
With hire he duelte, and to the beste
Thei love ech other wonder wel.
Bot sche which kepth the blinde whel,
Venus, whan thei be most above,
In al the hoteste of here love,
Hire whiel sche torneth, and thei felle
In the manere as I schal telle.
This king, which stod in al his welthe
Of pes, of worschipe and of helthe,
And felte him on no side grieved,
As he that hath his world achieved,

[6] Gower has much enlarged upon his probable source, the twelfth century *Pantheon* of Godfrey of Viterbo.
[7] Lombards. [8] skull.

Tho thoghte he wolde a feste make;
And that was for his wyves sake,
That sche the lordes ate feste,
That were obeissant to his heste,
Mai knowe: and so forth therupon
He let ordeine, and sende anon
Be lettres and be messagiers,
And warnede alle hise officiers
That every thing be wel arraied:
The grete stiedes were assaied
For joustinge and for tornement,
And many a perled garnement
Embroudred was ayein the dai.
The lordes in here beste arrai
Be comen ate time set;
On jousteth wel, an other bet,[1]
And otherwhile thei torneie,
And thus thei casten care aweie
And token lustes upon honde.
And after, thou schalt understonde,
To mete into the kinges halle
Thei come, as thei be beden alle:
And whan thei were set and served,
Thanne after, as it was deserved,
To hem that worthi knyhtes were,
So as thei seten hiere and there,
The pris was yove[2] and spoken oute
Among the heraldz al aboute.
And thus benethe and ek above
Al was of armes and of love,
Wherof abouten ate bordes
Men hadde manye sondri wordes,
That of the merthe which thei made
The king himself began to glade
Withinne his herte and tok a pride,
And sih[3] the cuppe stonde aside,
Which mad was of Gurmoundes hed,
As ye have herd, whan he was ded,
And was with gold and riche stones
Beset and bounde for the nones,
And stod upon a fot on heihte
Of burned gold, and with gret sleihte
Of werkmanschipe it was begrave
Of such werk as it scholde have,
And was policed[4] ek so clene
That no signe of the skulle is sene,
Bot as it were a gripes ey.[5]
The king bad bere his cuppe awey,
Which stod tofore him on the bord,
And fette thilke.[6] Upon his word
This skulle is fet and wyn therinne,
Wherof he bad his wif beginne:
'Drink with thi fader, Dame,' he seide.

[1] better. [2] given. [3] saw. [4] polished.
[5] griffin's or vulture's egg. [6] fetch that other.

And sche to his biddinge obeide,
And tok the skulle, and what hire liste
Sche drank, as sche which nothing wiste
What cuppe it was: and thanne al oute
The kyng in audience aboute
Hath told it was hire fader[7] skulle,
So that the lordes knowe schulle
Of his bataille a soth witnesse,
And made avant thurgh what prouesse
He hath his wyves love wonne,
Which of the skulle hath so begonne.
Tho was ther mochel pride alofte,
Thei speken alle; and sche was softe,
Thenkende on thilke unkynde[8] pride,
Of that hire lord so nyh hire side
Avanteth him that he hath slain
And piked out hire fader brain,
And of the skulle had mad a cuppe.
Sche soffreth al til thei were uppe,
And tho sche hath seknesse feigned,
And goth to chambre and hath compleigned
Unto a maide which sche triste,[9]
So that non other wyht it wiste.
This mayde Glodeside is hote,[10]
To whom this lady hath behote[11]
Of ladischipe al that sche can,
To vengen hire upon this man,
Which dede hire drinke in such a plit[12]
Among hem alle for despit
Of hire and of hire fader bothe;
Wherof hire thoghtes ben so wrothe,
Sche seith, that sche schal noght be glad,
Til that sche se him so bestad
That he nomore make avant.
And thus thei felle in covenant,
That thei acorden ate laste,
With suche wiles as thei caste
That thei wol gete of here acord
Som orped[13] knyht to sle this lord:
And with this sleihte thei beginne,
How thei Helmege myhten winne,
Which was the kinges boteler,[14]
A proud, a lusti bacheler,
And Glodeside he loveth hote.
And sche, to make him more assote,[15]
Hire love granteth, and be nyhte
Thei schape how thei togedre myhte
Abedde meete: and don it was
This same nyht; and in this cas
The qwene hirself the nyht secounde
Wente in hire stede, and there hath founde
A chambre derk withoute liht,

[7] The old possessive form. [8] unnatural. [9] trusted.
[10] called [11] promised. [12] manner. [13] valiant.
[14] butler. [15] doting.

And goth to bedde to this knyht.
And he, to kepe his observance,
To love doth his obeissance,
And weneth it be Glodeside;
And sche thanne after lay aside,
And axeth him what he hath do,
And who sche was sche tolde him tho,
And seide: 'Helmege, I am thi qwene
Now schal thi love wel be sene
Of that thou hast thi wille wroght:
Or it schal sore ben aboght,
Or thou schalt worche as I thee seie.
And if thou wolt be such a weie
Do my plesance and holde it stille,
For evere I schal ben at thi wille,
Bothe I and al myn heritage.'
Anon the wylde loves rage,
In which noman him can governe,
Hath mad him that he can noght werne,[1]
Bot fell al hol to hire assent:
And thus the whiel is al miswent,
The which fortune hath upon honde;
For how that evere it after stonde,
Thei schope among hem such a wyle,
The king was ded withinne a whyle.
So slihly cam it noght aboute
That thei ne ben discoevered oute,
So that it thoghte hem for the beste
To fle, for there was no reste:
And thus the tresor of the king
Thei trusse[2] and mochel other thing,
And with a certein felaschipe
Thei fiedde and wente awey be schipe,
And hielde here rihte cours fro thenne,
Til that thei come to Ravenne,
Wher thei the Dukes helpe soghte.
And he, so as thei him besoghte,
A place granteth forto duelle;
Bot after, whan he herde telle
Of the manere how thei have do,
This Duk let schape for hem so,
That of a puison which thei drunke
Thei hadden that thei have beswunke.[3]
And al this made avant[4] of Pride:
Good is therfore a man to hide
His oghne pris, for if he speke,
He mai lihtliche his thonk tobreke.[5]
In armes lith non avantance
To him which thenkth his name avance
And be renomed of his dede:
And also who that thenkth to spede
Of love, he mai him noght avaunte;
For what man thilke vice haunte,
His pourpos schal fulofte faile.
In armes he that wol travaile
Or elles loves grace atteigne,
His lose[6] tunge he mot restreigne,
Which berth of his honour the keie.[7]

[1] refuse. [2] pack up. [3] labored for, earned. [4] boast. [5] lose his reward.

THE TALE OF CONSTANTINE AND SILVESTER

(*Confessio Amantis*, bk. II, l. 3187)

Among the bokes of Latin[8]
I finde write of Constantin
The worthi Emperour of Rome,
Suche infortunes to him come,
Whan he was in his lusti age,
The lepre[9] cawhte in his visage
And so forth overal aboute,
That he ne mihte ryden oute:
So lefte he bothe schield and spere,
As he that mihte him noght bestere,
And hield him in his chambre clos.
Thurgh al the world the fame aros,
The grete clerkes ben asent
And come at his comandement
To trete upon this lordes hele.[10]
So longe thei togedre dele,
That thei upon this medicine
Apointen hem, and determine
That in the maner as it stod
Thei wolde him bathe in childes blod
Withinne sevene wynter age:
For, as thei sein, that scholde assuage
The lepre and al the violence,
Which that thei knewe of accidence
And noght be weie of kinde[11] is falle.
And therto thei acorden alle
As for final conclusioun,
And tolden here opinioun
To themperour: and he anon
His conseil tok, and therupon
With lettres and with seales oute
Thei sende in every lond aboute
The yonge children forto seche,
Whos blod, thei seiden, schal be leche
For themperoures maladie.
Ther was ynowh to wepe and crie
Among the modres, whan thei herde
Hou wofully this cause ferde,
Bot natheles thei moten bowe;
And thus wommen ther come ynowhe

[6] loose. [7] key. [8] These could be lives of Saint Silvester. See Macaulay's note. [9] leprosy. [10] health. [11] by mere chance, and not in the reasonable course of nature.

With children soukende on the tete.
Tho was ther manye teres lete;
Bot were hem lieve or were hem lothe,
The wommen and the children bothe
Into the paleis forth he broght
With many a sory hertes thoght
Of hem whiche of here bodi bore
The children hadde, and so forlore
Withinne a while scholden se.
The modres wepe in here degre,
And manye of hem aswoune falle,
The yonge babes criden alle:
This noyse aros, the lord it herde,
And loked out, and how it ferde
He sih, and as who seith [1] abreide [2]
Out of his slep, and thus he seide:
'O thou divine pourveance,
Which every man in the balance
Of kinde hast formed to be liche,
The povere is bore as is the riche
And deieth in the same wise;
Upon the fol, upon the wise
Siknesse and hele entrecomune; [3]
Mai non eschuie that fortune
Which kinde hath in hire lawe set;
Hire strengthe and beaute ben beset
To every man aliche fre,
That sche preferreth no degre
As in the disposicioun
Of bodili complexioun:
And ek of soule resonable
The povere child is bore als able
To vertu as the kinges sone;
For every man his oghne wone [4]
After the lust of his assay
The vice or vertu chese may.
Thus stonden alle men franchised,
Bot in astat thei ben divised;
To some worschipe and richesse,
To some poverte and distresse,
On lordeth and an other serveth;
Bot yit as every man deserveth
The world yifth noght his yiftes hiere.
Bot certes he hath gret matiere
To ben of good condicioun,
Which hath in his subjeccioun
The men that ben of his semblance.'
And ek he tok a remembrance
Howe he that made lawe of kinde
Wolde every man to lawe binde,
And bad a man, such as he wolde
Toward himself, riht such he scholde
Toward an other don also.
And thus this worthi lord as tho

[1] as it were. [2] started. [3] intermix. [4] custom.

Sette in balance his oghne astat
And with himself stod in debat,
And thoghte hou that it was noght good
To se so mochel mannes blod
Be spilt for cause of him alone.
He sih also the grete mone,
Of that the modres were unglade,
And of the wo the children made,
Wherof that al his herte tendreth,
And such pite withinne engendreth,
That him was levere forto chese
His oghne bodi forto lese,
Than se so gret a moerdre wroght
Upon the blod which gulteth noght. [5]
Thus for the pite which he tok
Alle othre leches he forsok,
And put him out of aventure
Al only into Goddes cure;
And seith, 'Who that woll maister be,
He mot be servant to pite.'
So ferforth he was overcome
With charite, that he hath nome [6]
His conseil and hise officers,
And bad unto hise tresorers
That thei his tresour al aboute
Departe among that povere route
Of wommen and of children bothe,
Wherof thei mihte hem fede and clothe
And saufli tornen hom ayein
Withoute lost of eny grein.
Thurgh charite thus he despendeth
His good, wherof that he amendeth
The povere poeple, and contrevaileth
The harm, that he hem so travaileth;
And thus the woful nyhtes sorwe
To joie is torned on the morwe;
Al was thonkinge, al was blessinge,
Which erst was wepinge and cursinge;
Thes wommen gon hom glade ynowh,
Echon for joie on other lowh, [7]
And preiden for this lordes hele,
Which hath relessed the querele,
And hath his oghne will forsake
In charite for Goddes sake.
Bot now hierafter thou schalt hiere
What God hath wroght in this matiere,
As he which doth al equite.
To him that wroghte charite
He was ayeinward [8] charitous,
And to pite he was pitous:
For it was nevere knowe yit
That charite goth unaquit.
The nyht, whan he was leid to slepe,
The hihe God, which wolde him kepe,

[5] is not guilty, [6] taken. [7] laughed. [8] in return.

Seint Peter and seint Poul him sende,
Be whom he wolde his lepre amende.
Thei tuo to him slepende appiere
Fro God, and seide in this manere:
'O Constantin, for thou hast served
Pite, thou hast pite deserved:
Forthi thou schalt such pite have
That God thurgh pite woll thee save.
So schalt thou double hele finde,
Ferst for thi bodiliche kinde,
And for thi wofull soule also,
Thou schalt ben hol of bothe tuo.
And for thou schalt thee noght despeire,
Thi lepre schal nomore empeire [1]
Til thou wolt sende therupon
Unto the Mont of Celion,
Wher that Silvestre and his clergie
Togedre duelle in compaignie
For drede of thee, which many day
Hast ben a fo to Cristes lay.[2]
And hast destruid to mochel schame
The prechours of his holy name.
Bot now thou hast somdiel appesed
Thi God, and with good dede plesed,
That thou thi pite hast bewared [3]
Upon the blod which thou hast spared.
Forthi to thi salvacion
Thou schalt have enformacioun,
Such as Silvestre schal the teche:
The nedeth of non other leche.'
This Emperour, which al this herde,
'Grant merci, lordes,' he ansuerde,
'I wol do so as ye me seie.
Bot of o thing I wolde preie:
What schal I telle unto Silvestre
Or of youre name or of youre estre?' [4]
And thei him tolden what thei hihte,
And forth withal out of his sihte
Thei passen up into the hevene.
And he awok out of his swevene,[5]
And clepeth, and men come anon:
He tolde his drem, and therupon
In such a wise as he hem telleth
The mont wher that Silvestre duelleth
Thei have in alle haste soght,
And founde he was and with hem broght
To themperour, which to him tolde
His swevene and elles that he wolde.
And whan Silvestre hath herd the king,
He was riht joiful of this thing,
And him began with al his wit
To techen upon holi writ
Ferst how mankinde was forlore,
And how the hihe God therfore
His Sone sende from above,
Which bore was for mannes love,
And after of his oghne chois
He tok his deth upon the crois;
And how in grave he was beloke,[6]
And how that he hath helle broke,
And tok hem out that were him lieve;[7]
And forto make ous full believe
That he was verrai Goddes Sone,
Ayein the kinde of mannes wone [8]
Fro dethe he ros the thridde day,
And whanne he wolde, as he wel may,
He styh [9] up to his fader evene
With fleissh and blod into the hevene;
And riht so in the same forme
In fleissh and blod he schal reforme,
Whan time comth, the qwike and dede
At thilke woful dai of drede,
Where every man schal take his dom,
Als wel the maister as the grom.
The mihti kinges retenue
That dai may stonde of no value
With worldes strengthe to defende;
For every man mot thanne entende
To stonde upon his oghne dedes
And leve all othre mennes nedes.
That dai mai no consail availe,
The pledour and the plee schal faile,
The sentence of that ilke day
Mai non appell sette in delay;
Ther mai no gold the jugge plie,[10]
That he ne schal the sothe trie
And setten every man upriht,
Als wel the plowman as the kniht:
The lewed man, the grete clerk
Schal stonde upon his oghne werk,
And such as he is founde tho,
Such schal he be for evermo.
Ther mai no peine be relessed,
Ther mai no joie ben encressed,
Bot endeles, as thei have do,
He schal receive on of the tuo.
And thus Silvestre with his sawe
The ground of al the newe lawe
With gret devocion he precheth,
Fro point to point and pleinly techeth
Unto this hethen Emperour;
And seith, the hihe creatour
Hath underfonge [11] his charite,
Of that he wroghte such pite,
Whan he the children hadde on honde.
Thus whan this lord hath understonde

1 grow worse. 2 faith. 3 showed. 4 abode. 5 dream.
6 shut up. 7 dear to him. 8 custom. 9 ascended. 10 bend, move. 11 received.

Of al this thing how that it ferde,
Unto Silvestre he thanne ansuerde,
With al his hole herte and seith
That he is redi to the feith.
And so the vessel which for blod
Was mad, Silvestre, ther it stod,
With clene water of the welle
In alle haste he let do felle,
And sette Constantin therinne
Al naked up unto the chinne.
And in the while it was begunne,
A liht, as thogh it were a sunne,
Fro hevene into the place com
Wher that he tok his christendom;[1]
And evere among the holi tales
Lich as thei weren fisshes skales
Ther fellen from him now and eft,[2]
Til that ther was nothing beleft
Of al his grete maladie.
For he that wolde him purefie,
The hihe God hath mad him clene,
So that ther lefte nothing sene;
He hath him clensed bothe tuo,
The bodi and the soule also.
Tho knew this Emperour in dede
That Cristes feith was forto drede,
And sende anon hise lettres oute
And let do crien al aboute,
Up peine of deth that noman weyve[3]
That he baptesme ne receive:
After his moder qweene Heleine
He sende, and so betwen hem tweine
Thei treten, that the cite all
Was cristned, and sche forth withall.
This Emperour, which hele hath founde,
Withinne Rome anon let founde
Tuo cherches, whiche he dede make
For Peter and for Poules sake,
Of whom he hadde avisioun;
And yaf therto possessioun
Of lordschipe and of worldes good.
Bot how so that his will was good
Toward the Pope and his franchise,
Yit hath it proved other wise,
To se the worchinge of the dede:
For in cronique this I rede;
Anon as he hath mad the yifte,
A vois was herd on hih the lifte,[4]
Of which al Rome was adrad,
And seith: 'To day is venym schad
In holi cherche of temporal,
Which medleth with the spirital.'
And hou it stant of that degree
Yit mai a man the sothe se:
God mai amende it, whan he wile,
I can ther to non other skile.[5]

[1] Christian baptism. [2] again.
[3] hesitate. [4] sky.

THE TALE OF ROSIPHELEE[6]

(*Confessio Amantis*, bk. IV, l. 1245)

Of Armenye, I rede thus,
Ther was a king, which Herupus
Was hote,[7] and he a lusti maide
To dowhter hadde, and as man saide
Hire name was Rosiphelee;
Which tho was of gret renomee,
For sche was bothe wys and fair
And scholde ben hire fader hair.[8]
Bot sche hadde o defalte of slowthe
Towardes love, and that was rowthe;[9]
For so wel cowde noman seie,
Which mihte sette hire in the weie
Of loves occupacioun
Thurgh non ymaginacion;
That scole wolde sche noght knowe.
And thus sche was on of the slowe
As of such hertes besinesse,
Til whanne Venus the goddesse,
Which loves court hath forto reule,
Hath broght hire into betre reule,
Forth with Cupide and with his miht:
For thei merveille how such a wiht,
Which tho was in hir lusti age,
Desireth nother mariage
Ne yit the love of paramours,
Which evere hath be the comun cours
Amonges hem that lusti were.
So was it schewed after there:
For he that hihe hertes loweth
With fyri dartes whiche he throweth,
Cupide, which of love is godd,
In chastisinge hath mad a rodd
To dryve awei hir wantounesse;[10]
So that withinne a while, I gesse,
Sche hadde on such a chance sporned,[11]
That al hire mod was overtorned,
Which ferst sche hadde of slow manere:
For thus it fell, as thou schalt hiere.
Whan come was the monthe of Maii,
Sche wolde walke upon a dai,
And that was er the sonne ariste;[12]
Of wommen bot a fewe it wiste,

[5] reason.
[6] For other versions of this widespread story, see *Romania*, Jan., 1900, an article on the "Purgatory of Cruel Beauties," by W. A. Neilson.
[7] called. [8] father's heir. [9] a pity.
[10] insubordination. [11] stumbled. [12] sun's rising.

And forth sche wente prively
Unto the park was faste by,
Al softe walkende on the gras,
Til sche cam ther the launde was,
Thurgh which ther ran a gret rivere.
It thoghte[1] hir fair, and seide, 'Here
I wole abide under the schawe':[2]
And bad hire wommen to withdrawe,
And ther sche stod al one stille,
To thenke what was in hir wille.
Sche sih the swote floures springe,
Sche herde glade foules singe,
Sche sih the bestes in her kinde,
The buck, the do, the hert, the hinde,
The madle[3] go with the femele;
And so began ther a querele
Betwen love and hir oghne herte,
Fro which sche couthe noght asterte.
And as sche caste hire yhe aboute,
Sche syh clad in o suite a route
Of ladis, wher thei comen ryde
Along under the wodes syde:
On faire amblende hors thei sete,
That were al whyte, fatte and grete,
And everichon thei ride on side.[4]
The sadles were of such a pride,
With perle and gold so wel begon,[5]
So riche syh sche nevere non;
In kertles and in copes[6] riche
Thei weren clothed, alle liche,
Departed evene of whyt and blew;
With alle lustes that sche knew
Thei were enbrouded overal.
Here bodies weren long and smal,
The beaute faye[7] upon here face
Non erthly thing it may desface;
Corones on here hed thei beere,
As ech of hem a qweene weere,
That al the gold of Cresus halle
The leste coronel of alle
Ne mihte have boght after the worth:
Thus come thei ridende forth.

The kinges dowhter, which this syh,
For pure abaissht[8] drowh hire adryh[9]
And hield hire clos under the bowh,
And let hem passen stille ynowh;
For as hire thoghte in hire avis,
To hem that were of such a pris
Sche was noght worthi axen there
Fro when they come or what thei were:
Bot levere than this worldes good
Sche wolde have wist hou that it stod,

And putte hire hed alitel oute;
And as sche lokede hire aboute,
Sche syh comende under the linde[10]
A womman up an hors behinde.
The hors on which sche rod was blak,
Al lene and galled on the back,
And haltede, as he were encluyed,[11]
Whereof the womman was annuied;[12]
Thus was the hors in sori plit,
Bot for al that a sterre whit
Amiddes in the front he hadde.
Hir sadel ek was wonder badde,
In which the wofull womman sat,
And natheles ther was with that
A riche bridel for the nones
Of gold and preciouse stones.
Hire cote was somdiel totore;[13]
Aboute hir middel twenty score
Of horse haltres and wel mo
Ther hyngen ate time tho.

Thus whan sche cam the ladi nyh,
Than tok sche betre hiede and syh
This womman fair was of visage,
Freyssh, lusti, yong and of tendre age;
And so this ladi, ther sche stod,
Bethoghte hire wel and understod
That this, which com ridende tho,
Tidinges couthe telle of tho
Which as sche sih tofore ryde,
And putte hir forth and preide abide,
And seide, 'Ha, suster, let me hiere,
What ben thei, that now riden hiere,
And ben so richeliche arraied?'

This womman, which com so esmaied,[14]
Ansuerde with ful softe speche,
And seith, 'Ma dame, I schal you teche.
These ar of tho that whilom were
Servantz to love, and trowthe beere,
Ther as thei hadde here herte set.
Fare wel, for I mai noght be let:[15]
Ma dame, I go in mi servise,
So moste I haste in alle wise;
Forthi, ma dame, yif me leve,
I mai noght longe with you leve.'

'Ha, goode soster, yit I preie,
Tell me whi ye ben so beseie[16]
And with these haltres thus begon.'[17]

'Ma dame, whilom I was on
That to mi fader hadde a king;
Bot I was slow, and for no thing
Me liste noght to love obeie,
And that I now ful sore abeie.[18]

[1] seemed. [2] leafy shade. [3] male. [4] side-saddle, probably. [5] decorated. [6] mantles. [7] fairy. Many MSS. read *faire*. [8] for very diffidence. [9] aside.

[10] linden. [11] had a nail in his foot. [12] distressed. [13] somewhat torn. [14] dismayed. [15] delayed. [16] arrayed. [17] furnished. [18] pay for.

For I whilom no love hadde,
Min hors is now so fieble and badde,
And al totore is myn arai,
And every yeer this freisshe Maii
These lusti ladis ryde aboute,
And I mot nedes suie[1] here route
In this manere as ye now se,
And trusse here haltres forth with me,
And am bot as here horse knave.
Non other office I ne have,
Hem thenkth I am worthi nomore,
For I was slow in loves lore,
Whan I was able forto lere,
And wolde noght the tales hiere
Of hem that couthen love teche.'
'Now tell me thanne, I you beseche,
Wherof that riche bridel serveth.'
With that hire chere awei sche swerveth,[2]
And gan to wepe, and thus sche tolde:
'This bridel, which ye nou beholde
So riche upon myn horse hed,—
Ma dame, afore, er I was ded,
Whan I was in mi lusti lif,
Ther fel into myn herte a strif
Of love, which me overcom,
So that therafter hiede I nom[3]
And thoghte I wolde love a kniht:
That laste wel a fourtenyht,
For it no lengere mihte laste,
So nyh my lif was ate laste.
Bot now, allas, to late war
That I ne hadde him loved ar:[4]
For deth cam so in haste bime,[5]
Er I therto hadde eny time,
That it ne mihte ben achieved.
Bot for al that I am relieved,
Of that mi will was good therto,
That love soffreth it be so
That I schal swiche a bridel were.
Now have ye herd al myn ansuere:
To Godd, ma dame, I you betake,
And warneth alle for mi sake,
Of love that thei ben noght ydel,
And bidd hem thenke upon mi brydel.'
And with that word al sodienly
Sche passeth, as it were a sky,[6]
Al clene out of this ladi sihte:
And tho for fere hire herte afflihte,[7]
And seide to hirself, 'Helas!
I am riht in the same cas.
Bot if I live after this day,
I schal amende it, if I may.'
And thus homward this lady wente,
And changede al hire ferste ententе
Withinne hire herte, and gan to swere
That sche none haltres wolde bere.

[1] follow. [2] turns her face away. [3] took.
[4] sooner. [5] by me. [6] cloud. [7] was afflicted.

THE TALE OF CEYX AND ALCEONE[8]

(*Confessio Amantis*, bk. IV, l. 2917)

Mi sone, and for thou tellest so,
A man mai finde of time ago
That many a swevene[9] hath be certein,
Al be it so that som men sein
That swevenes ben of no credence.
Bot forto schewe in evidence
That thei fulofte sothe thinges
Betokene, I thenke in my wrytinges
To telle a tale therupon,
Which fell be olde daies gon.

This finde I write in poesie:
Ceix the king of Trocinie
Hadde Alceone to his wif,
Which as hire oghne hertes lif
Him loveth; and he hadde also
A brother, which was cleped tho
Dedalion, and he per cas
Fro kinde of man forschape was
Into a goshauk of likenesse;
Wherof the king gret hevynesse
Hath take, and thoghte in his corage
To gon upon a pelrinage
Into a strange regioun,
Wher he hath his devocioun
To don his sacrifice and preie,
If that he mihte in eny weie
Toward the goddes finde grace
His brother hele[10] to pourchace,
So that he mihte be reformed
Of that he hadde be transformed.
To this pourpos and to this ende
This king was redy forto wende,
As he which wolde go be schipe;
And forto don him felaschipe
His wif unto the see him broghte,
With al hire herte and him besoghte,
That he the time hire wolde sein,
Whan that he thoghte come ayein:
'Withinne,' he seith, 'tuo monthe day.'
And thus in al the haste he may
He tok his leve, and forth he seileth
Wepende, and sche hirself beweileth,

[8] Gower's source is Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, XI, 266 f. Compare Chaucer's version in the *Book of the Duchess*, l. 62 f.
[9] dream. [10] health, well-being.

And torneth hom, ther sche cam fro.
Bot whan the monthes were ago,
The whiche he sette of his comynge,
And that sche herde no tydinge,
Ther was no care forto seche:
Wherof the goddes to beseche
Tho sche began in many wise,
And to Juno hire sacrifise
Above alle othre most sche dede,
And for hir lord sche hath so bede [1]
To wite and knowe hou that he ferde,
That Juno the goddesse hire herde
Anon and upon this matiere
Sche bad Yris hir messagere
To Slepes hous that sche schal wende,
And bidde him that he make an ende
Be swevene and schewen al the cas
Unto this ladi, hou it was.
This Yris, fro the hihe stage
Which undertake hath the message,
Hire reyny cope [2] dede upon,
The which was wonderli begon
With colours of diverse hewe,
An hundred mo than men it knewe;
The hevene lich unto a bowe
Sche bende, and so she cam doun lowe,
The god of slep wher that sche fond.
And that was in a strange lond,
Which marcheth [3] upon Chymerie:
For ther, as seith the poesie,
The god of slep hath mad his hous,
Which of entaille [4] is merveilous.
Under an hell [5] ther is a cave,
Which of the sonne mai noght have,
So that noman mai knowe ariht
The point betwen the dai and nyht:
Ther is no fyr, ther is no sparke,
Ther is no dore, which mai charke,[6]
Wherof an yhe scholde unschette,
So that inward ther is no lette.
And forto speke of that withoute,
Ther stant no gret tree nyh aboute
Wher on ther myhte crowe or pie
Alihte, forto clepe or crie:
Ther is no cok to crowe day,
Ne beste non which noise [7] may
The hell; bot al aboute round
Ther is growende upon the ground
Popi, which berth the sed of slep,
With othere herbes suche an hep.
A stille water for the nones
Rennende upon the smale stones,
Which hihte of Lethes the rivere,
Under that hell in such manere
Ther is, which yifth gret appetit
To slepe. And thus full of delit
Slep hath his hous; and of his couche
Withinne his chambre if I schal touche,
Of hebenus [8] that slepi tree
The bordes al aboute be,
And for he scholde slepe softe,
Upon a fethrebed alofte
He lith with many a pilwe of doun:
The chambre is strowed up and doun
With swevenes many thousendfold.
Thus cam Yris into this hold,
And to the bedd, which is al blak,
Sche goth, and ther with Slep sche spak,
And in the wise as sche was bede
The message of Juno sche dede.
Fulofte hir wordes sche reherceth,
Er sche his slepi eres perceth;
With mochel wo bot ate laste
His slombrende yhen [9] he upcaste
And seide hir that it schal be do.
Wherof among a thousend tho,
Withinne his hous that slepi were,
In special he ches out there
Thre, whiche scholden do this dede:
The ferste of hem, so as I rede,
Was Morpheüs, the whos nature
Is forto take the figure
Of what persone that him liketh,
Wherof that he fulofte entriketh [10]
The lif [11] which slepe schal be nyhte;
And Ithecus that other hihte,
Which hath the vois of every soun,
The chiere and the condicioun
Of every lif, what so it is:
The thridde suiende [12] after this
Is Panthasas, which may transforme
Of every thing the rihte forme,
And change it in an other kinde.
Upon hem thre, so as I finde,
Of swevenes stant al thapparence,
Which otherwhile is evidence
And otherwhile bot a jape.[13]
Bot natheles it is so schape,
That Morpheüs be nyht al one
Appiereth until Alceone
In likenesse of hir housbonde
Al naked ded upon the stronde,
And hou he dreynte [14] in special
These othre tuo it schewen al.
The tempeste of the blake cloude,
The wode [15] see, the wyndes loude,

[1] prayed. [2] rainy cloak. [3] borders. [4] fashion. [5] Kentish for *hill*. [6] creak. [7] disturb. [8] ebony. [9] eyes. [10] deceives. [11] person. [12] following. [13] trick. [14] drowned. [15] raging.

Al this sche mette,[1] and sih him dyen;
Wherof that sche began to crien,
Slepende abedde ther sche lay.
And with that noise of hire affray
Hir wommen sterten up aboute,
Whiche of here ladi were in doute,
And axen hire hou that sche ferde;
And sche, riht as sche syh and herde,
Hir swevene hath told hem everydel.
And thei it halsen[2] alle wel
And sein it is a tokne of goode;
Bot til sche wiste hou that it stode,
Sche hath no confort in hire herte
Upon the morwe, and up sche sterte,
And to the see, where that sche mette
The bodi lay, withoute lette
Sche drowh; and whan that sche cam nyh,
Stark ded, hise armes sprad, sche syh
Hire lord flietende upon the wawe.[3]
Wherof hire wittes ben withdrawe,
And sche, which tok of deth no kepe,
Anon forth lepte into the depe,
And wolde have cawht him in hire arm.
This infortune of double harm
The goddes fro the hevene above
Behielde, and for the trowthe of love,
Which in this worthi ladi stod,
Thei have upon the salte flod
Hire dreinte[4] lord and hire also
Fro deth to lyve torned so,
That thei ben schapen into briddes
Swimmende upon the wawe amiddes.
And whan sche sih hire lord livende
In liknesse of a bridd swimmende,
And sche was of the same sort,
So as sche mihte do desport,
Upon the joie which sche hadde
Hire wynges bothe abroad sche spradde,
And him, so as sche mai suffise,
Beclipte[5] and keste in such a wise,
As sche was whilom wont to do:
Hire wynges for hire armes tuo
Sche tok, and for hire lippes softe
Hire harde bile, and so fulofte
Sche fondeth[6] in hire briddes forme,
If that sche mihte hirself conforme
To do the plesance of a wif,
As sche dede in that other lif:
For thogh sche hadde hir pouer lore,[7]
Hir will stod as it was tofore,
And serveth him so as sche mai.
Wherof into this ilke day
Togedre upon the see thei wone,[8]
Wher many a dowhter and a sone
Thei bringen forth of briddes kinde;
And for men scholden take in mynde
This Alceoun the trewe queene,
Hire briddes yit, as it is seene,
Of Alceoun[9] the name bere.

1 dreamed. 2 interpret. 3 wave. 4 drowned.
5 embraced. 6 tries. 7 lost. 8 dwell.

THE TALE OF ADRIAN AND BARDUS[10]

(*Confessio Amantis*, bk. v, l. 4937)

To speke of an unkinde[11] man,
I finde hou whilom Adrian,
Of Rome which a gret lord was,
Upon a day as he per cas[12]
To wode in his huntinge wente,
It hapneth at a soudein wente,[13]
After his chace as he poursuieth,
Thurgh happ, the which noman eschuieth,
He fell unwar into a pet,[14]
Wher that it mihte noght be let.
The pet was dep and he fell lowe,
That of his men non myhte knowe
Wher he becam, for non was nyh,
Which of his fall the meschief syh.
And thus al one ther he lay
Clepende[15] and criende al the day
For socour and deliverance,
Til ayein eve it fell per chance,
A while er it began to nyhte,
A povere man, which Bardus hihte,
Cam forth walkende with his asse,
And hadde gadred him a tasse[16]
Of grene stickes and of dreie
To selle, who that wolde hem beie,
As he which hadde no liflode,[17]
Bot whanne he myhte such a lode
To toune with his asse carie.
And as it fell him forto tarie
That ilke time nyh the pet,
And hath the trusse faste knet,
He herde a vois, which cride dimme,
And he his ere to the brimme
Hath leid, and herde it was a man,
Which seide, 'Ha, help hier Adrian,
And I wol yiven half mi good.'
The povere man this understod,
As he that wolde gladly winne,
And to this lord which was withinne
He spak and seide, 'If I thee save,
What sikernesse[18] schal I have

9 Halcyon. 10 Gower's source may be the *Speculum Stultorum* of Nigel Wireker (fl. 1190). 11 unnatural. 12 by chance. 13 turn. 14 Kentish for *pit*. 15 calling. 16 bundle. 17 livelihood. 18 security.

Of covenant, that afterward
Thou wolt me yive such reward
As thou behihtest nou tofore?'
The other hath his othes swore
By hevene and be the goddes alle,
If that it myghte so befalle
That he out of the pet him broghte,
Of all the goodes whiche he oghte[1]
He schal have evene halvendel.
This Bardus seide he wolde wel;
And with this word his asse anon
He let untrusse, and therupon
Doun goth the corde into the pet,
To which he hath at ende knet
A staf, wherby, he seide, he wolde
That Adrian him scholde holde.
Bot it was tho per chance falle,
Into that pet was also falle
An ape, which at thilke throwe,
Whan that the corde cam doun lowe,
Al sodeinli therto he skipte
And it in bothe hise armes clipte.[2]
And Bardus with his asse anon
Him hath updrawe, and he is gon.
But whan he sih it was an ape,
He wende al hadde ben a jape[3]
Of faierie, and sore him dradde:[4]
And Adrian eftsone gradde[5]
For help, and cride and preide faste,
And he eftsone his corde caste;
Bot whan it cam unto the grounde,
A gret serpent it hath bewounde,
The which Bardus anon up drouh.
And thanne him thoghte wel ynouh
It was fantosme, bot yit he herde
The vois, and he therto ansuerde,
'What wiht art thou in Goddes name?'
'I am,' quod Adrian, 'the same,
Whos good thou schalt have evene half.'
Quod Bardus, 'Thanne a Goddes half
The thridde time assaie I schal':
And caste his corde forth withal
Into the pet, and whan it cam
To him, this lord of Rome it nam,
And therupon him hath adresced,
And with his hand fulofte blessed,
And thanne he bad to Bardus hale.
And he, which understod his tale,
Betwen him and his asse al softe
Hath drawe and set him up alofte
Withouten harm al esely.
He seith noght ones 'Grant merci,'[6]
Bot strauhte[7] him forth to the cite,
And let this povere Bardus be.
And natheles this simple man
His covenant, so as he can,
Hath axed; and that other seide,
If so be that he him umbreide[8]
Of oght that hath be speke or do,
It schal ben venged on him so,
That him were betre to be ded.
And he can tho non other red,[9]
But on his asse ayein he caste
His trusse, and heith homward faste:
And whan that he cam hom to bedde,
He tolde his wif hou that he spedde.
Bot finaly to speke oght more
Unto this lord he dradde him sore,
So that a word ne dorste he sein:
And thus upon the morwe ayein,
In the manere as I recorde,
Forth with his asse and with his corde
To gadre wode, as he dede er,
He goth; and whan that he cam ner
Unto the place where he wolde,
He hath his ape anon beholde,
Which hadde gadred al aboute
Of stickes hiere and there a route,[10]
And leide hem redy to his hond,
Wherof he made his trosse and bond.
Fro dai to dai and in this wise
This ape profreth his servise,
So that he hadde of wode ynouh.
Upon a time and as he drouh
Toward the wode, he sih besyde
The grete gastli serpent glyde,
Til that sche cam in his presence,
And in hir kinde a reverence
Sche hath him do, and forth withal
A ston mor briht than a cristall
Out of hir mouth tofore his weie
Sche let doun falle, and wente aweie,
For that he schal noght ben adrad.
Tho was this povere Bardus glad,
Thonkende God, and to the ston
He goth and takth it up anon,
And hath gret wonder in his wit
Hou that the beste him hath aquit,
Wher that the mannes sone hath failed,
For whom he hadde most travailed.
Bot al he putte in Goddes hond,
And torneth hom, and what he fond
Unto his wif he hath it schewed;
And thei, that wern bothe lewed,[11]
Acorden that he scholde it selle.

1 owned. 2 caught. 3 trick.
4 he feared; lit., it dreaded him (dat.).
5 cried again. 6 much thanks.
7 lit. stretched, i.e. hurried. 8 reproached.
9 counsel. 10 quantity. 11 ignorant.

And he no lengere wolde duelle,
Bot forth anon upon the tale
The ston he profreth to the sale;
And riht as he himself it sette,
The jueler anon forth fette
The gold and made his paiement,
Therof was no delaiement.
Thus whan this ston was boght and sold,
Homward with joie manyfold
This Bardus goth; and whan he cam
Home to his hous and that he nam
His gold out of his purs, withinn
He fond his ston also therinne,
Wherof for joie his herte pleide,
Unto his wif and thus he seide,
'Lo, hier my gold, lo, hier mi ston!'
His wif hath wonder therupon,
And axeth him hou that mai be.
'Nou be mi trouthe I not,'[1] quod he,
'Bot I dar swere upon a bok,
That to my marchant I it tok,[2]
And he it hadde whan I wente:
So knowe I noght to what entente
It is nou hier, bot it be grace.
Forthi tomorwe in other place
I wole it fonde[3] forto selle,
And if it wol noght with him duelle,
Bot crepe into mi purs ayein,
Than dar I saufly[4] swere and sein,
It is the vertu of the ston.'
The morwe cam, and he is gon
To seche aboute in other stede
His ston to selle, and he so dede,
And lefte it with his chapman there.
Bot whan that he cam elleswhere,
In presence of his wif at hom,
Out of his purs and that he nom[5]
His gold, he fond his ston withal:
And thus it fell him overal,[6]
Where he it solde in sondri place,

[1] know not. [2] gave. [3] try.
[4] safely. [5] took. [6] everywhere.

Such was the fortune and the grace.
Bot so wel may nothing ben hidd,
That it nys ate laste kidd:[7]
This fame goth aboute Rome
So ferforth, that the wordes come
To themperour Justinian;
And he let sende for the man,
And axede him hou that it was.
And Bardus tolde him al the cas,
Hou that the worm and ek the beste,
Althogh thei maden no beheste,[8]
His travail hadden wel aquit;
Bot he which hadde a mannes wit,
And made his covenant be mouthe
And swor therto al that he couthe
To parte and yiven half his good,
Hath nou foryete hou that it stod,
As he which wol no trouthe holde.
This Emperour al that he tolde
Hath herd, and thilke unkindenesse
He seide he wolde himself redresse.
And thus in court of juggement
This Adrian was thanne assent,
And the querele in audience
Declared was in the presence
Of themperour and many mo;
Wherof was mochel speche tho
And gret wondringe among the press.
Bot ate laste natheles
For the partie which hath pleigned
The lawe hath diemed[9] and ordeigned
Be hem that were avised wel,
That he schal have the halvendel[10]
Thurghout of Adrianes good.
And thus of thilke unkinde blod
Stant the memoire into this day,
Wherof that every wysman may
Ensamplen him, and take in mynde
What schame it is to ben unkinde;
Ayein the which reson debateth,
And every creature it hateth.

[7] known. [8] promise. [9] deemed. [10] half.

GEOFFREY CHAUCER

THE CANTERBURY TALES

THE PROLOGUE

Here biginneth the Book of the Tales of Caunterbury

WHAN that Aprille with his shoures sote[1]
The droghte of Marche hath perced to the rote,
And bathed every veyne in swich[2] licour,
Of which vertu engendred is the flour;
Whan Zephirus eek with his swete breeth
Inspired hath in every holt and heeth
The tendre croppes, and the yonge sonne
Hath in the Ram his halfe cours y-ronne,[3]
And smale fowles maken melodye,
That slepen al the night with open yë,
(So priketh hem nature in hir corages[4]);
Than longen folk to goon on pilgrimages
And palmers for to seken straunge strondes
To ferne halwes, couthe[5] in sondry londes;
And specially, from every shires ende
Of Engelond, to Caunterbury they wende,
The holy blisful martir for to seke,
That hem hath holpen, whan that they were seke.

Bifel that, in that seson on a day,
In Southwerk at the Tabard as I lay
Redy to wenden on my pilgrimage
To Caunterbury with ful devout corage,
At night was come in-to that hostelrye
Wel nyne and twenty in a companye,
Of sondry folk, by aventure y-falle
In felawshipe, and pilgrims were they alle,
That toward Caunterbury wolden ryde.
The chambres and the stables weren wyde,
And wel we weren esed atte beste.[6]
And shortly, whan the sonne was to reste,
So hadde I spoken with hem everichon,
That I was of hir felawshipe anon,
And made forward[7] erly for to ryse,
To take our wey ther as I yow devyse.

But natheles, whyl I have tyme and space,
Er that I ferther in this tale pace,
Me thinketh it acordaunt to resoun,
To telle yow al the condicioun
Of ech of hem, so as it semed me,
And whiche they weren, and of what degree;
And eek in what array that they were inne:
And at a knight than wol I first biginne.

A KNIGHT ther was, and that a worthy man,
That fro the tyme that he first bigan
To ryden out, he loved chivalrye,
Trouthe and honour, fredom and curteisye.
Ful worthy was he in his lordes werre,
And thereto hadde he riden (no man ferre[8])
As wel in Cristendom as hethenesse,
And ever honoured for his worthinesse.

At Alisaundre he was, whan it was wonne;
Ful ofte tyme he hadde the bord bigonne[9]
Aboven alle naciouns in Pruce.[10]
In Lettow[11] hadde he reysed[12] and in Ruce,
No Cristen man so ofte of his degree.
In Gernade[13] at the sege eek hadde he be
Of Algezir,[14] and riden in Belmarye.[15]
At Lyeys was he, and at Satalye,[16]
Whan they were wonne; and in the Grete See[17]
At many a noble armee[18] hadde he be.
At mortal batailles hadde he been fiftene,
And foughten for our feith at Tramissene[15]
In listes thryes, and ay slayn his fo.
This ilke[19] worthy knight had been also

[1] sweet. [2] such.
[3] In the first half of April the sun is in the second half of the Zodiacal sign of the Ram.
[4] dispositions. [5] distant saints, renowned.
[6] made as comfortable as possible. [7] agreement.
[8] farther.
[9] had the honor of sitting at the head of the table.
[10] Prussia. [11] Lithuania.
[12] made a campaign. [13] Grenada.
[14] Algeciras near Cape Trafalgar, taken by Alfonso of Castile in 1344.
[15] Benmarin and Tremeyen, districts in the north of Africa where the Christians and Moors fought.
[16] Ayas and Adalia on the south coast of Asia Minor.
[17] Mediterranean.
[18] expedition; *aryve* in one MS., which Skeat prefers.
[19] same.

Somtyme with the lord of Palatye,[1]
Ageyn[2] another hethen in Turkye:
And evermore he hadde a sovereyn prys.[3]
And though that he were worthy, he was wys,
And of his port as meke as is a mayde.
He never yet no vileinye ne sayde
In al his lyf, un-to no maner wight.
He was a verray parfit gentil knight.
But for to tellen yow of his array,
His hors[4] were gode, but he was nat gay.
Of fustian[5] he wered a gipoun[6]
Al bismotered with his habergeoun,[7]
For he was late y-come from his viage,
And wente for to doon his pilgrimage.
With him ther was his sone, a yong SQUYER,
A lovyere, and a lusty bacheler,[8]
With lokkes crulle, as they were leyd in presse.[9]
Of twenty yeer of age he was, I gesse.
Of his stature he was of evene[10] lengthe,
And wonderly deliver,[11] and greet of strengthe.
And he had been somtyme in chivachye,[12]
In Flaundres, in Artoys, and Picardye,
And born him wel, as of so litel space,
In hope to stonden in his lady[13] grace.
Embrouded was he, as it were a mede
Al ful of fresshe floures, whyte and rede.
Singinge he was, or floytinge,[14] al the day;
He was as fresh as is the month of May.
Short was his goune, with sleves longe and wyde.
Wel coude he sitte on hors, and faire ryde.
He coude songes make and wel endyte,[15]
Juste and eek daunce, and wel purtreye and wryte.
So hote he lovede, that by nightertale[16]
He sleep namore than dooth a nightingale.
Curteys he was, lowly, and servisable,
And carf[17] biforn his fader at the table.
A YEMAN[18] hadde he, and servaunts namo
At that tyme, for him liste ryde so;
And he was clad in cote and hood of grene;
A sheef of pecok-arwes brighte and kene
Under his belt he bar ful thriftily;
(Wel coude he dresse his takel yemanly:
His arwes drouped noght with fetheres lowe),
And in his hand he bar a mighty bowe.
A not-heed[19] hadde he, with a broun visage.
Of wode-craft wel coude he al the usage.
Upon his arm he bar a gay bracer,[20]
And by his syde a swerd and a bokeler,
And on that other syde a gay daggere,
Harneised[21] wel, and sharp as point of spere;
A Cristofre[22] on his brest of silver shene.[23]
An horn he bar, the bawdrik was of grene;
A forster was he, soothly, as I gesse.
Ther was also a Nonne, a PRIORESSE,
That of hir smyling was ful simple and coy;[24]
Hir gretteste ooth was but by sëynt Loy;[25]
And she was cleped madame Eglentyne.
Ful wel she song the service divyne,
Entuned in hir nose ful semely;
And Frensh she spak ful faire and fetisly,[26]
After the scole of Stratford atte Bowe,[27]
For Frensh of Paris was to hir unknowe.
At mete wel y-taught was she with-alle;
She leet no morsel from hir lippes falle,
Ne wette hir fingres in hir sauce depe.
Wel coude she carie a morsel, and wel kepe,
That no drope ne fille up-on hir brest.
In curteisye was set ful muche hir lest.[28]
Hir over lippe wyped she so clene,
That in hir coppe was no ferthing[29] sene
Of grece, whan she dronken hadde hir draughte.
Ful semely after hir mete she raughte,[30]
And sikerly[31] she was of greet disport,[32]
And ful plesaunt, and amiable of port,
And peyned hir to countrefete chere
Of court, and been estatlich[33] of manere,
And to ben holden digne[34] of reverence.
But, for to speken of hir conscience,
She was so charitable and so pitous,
She wolde wepe, if that she sawe a mous
Caught in a trappe, if it were deed or bledde.
Of smale houndes had she, that she fedde

[1] Palatia, in Asia Minor or in the Sea of Marmora.
[2] against. [3] reputation.
[4] N.B. the plural — a long-stem neuter noun in Anglo-Saxon. (Cf. yeer in l. 82.)
[5] coarse cloth. [6] doublet.
[7] stained by the iron rings of his coat-of-mail.
[8] aspirant for knighthood.
[9] curly, as if from curling-tongs or some such machine.
[10] medium. [11] active. [12] cavalry expeditions.
[13] lady's, — an old feminine genitive. [14] piping.
[15] compose both words and music of songs.
[16] night-time. [17] carved. [18] Yeoman.
[19] cropped pate. [20] To protect the forearm from the bowstring. [21] Adorned. [22] Image of St. Christopher. [23] fair. [24] shy.
[25] On this favorite saint see the article by J. L. Lowes in the *Romanic Review*, v, 368.
[26] elegantly. [27] A convent near London. [28] pleasure. [29] smallest trace. [30] reached. [31] verily.
[32] was a good-natured person. [33] dignified. [34] worthy.

With rosted flesh, or milk and wastel-breed.[1]
But sore weep she if oon of hem were deed,
Or if men[2] smoot it with a yerde smerte:[3]
And al was conscience and tendre herte.
Ful semely hir wimpel pinched[4] was;
Hir nose tretys;[5] hir eyen greye as glas;
Hir mouth ful smal, and ther-to softe and reed;
But sikerly she hadde a fair forheed;
It was almost a spanne brood, I trowe;
For, hardily,[6] she was nat undergrowe.
Ful fetis[7] was hir cloke, as I was war.
Of smal coral aboute hir arm she bar
A peire[8] of bedes, gauded[9] al with grene;
And ther-on heng a broche of gold ful shene,
On which ther was first write a crowned A,
And after, *Amor vincit omnia.*

Another NONNE with hir hadde she,
That was hir chapeleyne, and PREESTES THREE.

A MONK ther was, a fair for the maistrye,[10]
An out-rydere,[11] that lovede venerye;
A manly man, to been an abbot able.
Ful many a deyntee hors hadde he in stable:
And, whan he rood, men mighte his brydel here
Ginglen in a whistling wind as clere,
And eek as loude as dooth the chapel-belle.
Ther as this lord was keper of the celle,[12]
The reule of seint Maure or of seint Beneit,[13]
By-cause that it was old and som-del streit, —[14]
This ilke monk leet olde thinges pace,
And held after the newe world the space.
He yaf nat of that text a pulled[15] hen,
That seith, that hunters been nat holy men;
Ne that a monk, whan he is cloisterlees,[16]
Is lykned til a fish that is waterlees;
This is to seyn, a monk out of his cloistre.
But thilke text held he nat worth an oistre;
And I seyde, his opinioun was good.
What sholde he studie, and make himselven wood,[17]
Upon a book in cloistre alwey to poure,
Or swinken[18] with his handes, and laboure,
As Austin bit[19]? How shal the world be served?
Lat Austin have his swink to him reserved.
Therfore he was a pricasour[20] aright;
Grehoundes he hadde, as swifte as fowel in flight;
Of priking[21] and of hunting for the hare
Was al his lust, for no cost wolde he spare.
I seigh his sleves purfiled[22] at the hond
With grys,[23] and that the fyneste of a lond;
And, for to festne his hood under his chin,
He hadde of gold y-wroght a curious pin:
A love-knotte in the gretter ende ther was.
His heed was balled,[24] that shoon as any glas,
And eek his face, as he had been anoint.
He was a lord ful fat and in good point;[25]
His eyen stepe,[26] and rollinge in his heed,
That stemed as a forneys of a leed;[27]
His botes souple, his hors in greet estat.
Now certeinly he was a fair prelat;
He was nat pale as a for-pyned[28] goost.
A fat swan loved he best of any roost.
His palfrey was as broun as is a berye.

A FRERE ther was, a wantown and a merye,
A limitour,[29] a ful solempne[30] man.
In alle the ordres foure[31] is noon that can[32]
So muche of daliaunce and fair langage.
He hadde maad ful many a mariage
Of yonge wommen, at his owne cost.
Un-to his ordre he was a noble post.[33]
Ful wel biloved and famulier was he
With frankeleyns[34] over-al in his contree,
And eek with worthy wommen of the toun:
For he had power of confessioun,
As seyde him-self, more than a curat,
For of his ordre he was licentiat.
Ful sweetly herde he confessioun,
And plesaunt was his absolucioun;

[1] a fine sort of bread — almost cake. [2] one. [3] with a stick smartly. [4] pleated. [5] well shaped. [6] certainly. [7] elegant. [8] string.

[9] After every ten corals of her rosary was a green bead.

[10] a preëminent one.

[11] one that had to oversee the manors belonging to his convent.

[12] subordinate convent.

[13] St. Maur and St. Benedict are two of the founders of the great, strict Benedictine order in the sixth century.

[14] strict. [15] plucked. [16] *recchelees* in most MSS.

[17] crazy. [18] work. [19] St. Augustine bids.

[20] enthusiastic rider. [21] riding, lit. "spurring."

[22] adorned. [23] fur. [24] bald. [25] stout, *en bon point.* [26] bright, protruding.

[27] His head steamed like the vat of a distilling apparatus; or, his eyes shone like the fire under a cauldron.

[28] tormented.

[29] one licensed to beg in a limited district.

[30] important.

[31] Dominicans, Franciscans, Carmelites, and Austin Friars.

[32] knows. [33] pillar. [34] rich farmers.

He was an esy man to yeve penaunce
Ther as he wiste to han[1] a good pitaunce;
For unto a povre ordre for to yive
Is signe that a man is wel y-shrive.
For if he yaf, he dorste make avaunt,
He wiste that a man was repentaunt.
For many a man so hard is of his herte,
He may nat wepe al-thogh him sore smerte.
Therfore, in stede of weping and preyeres,
Men moot[2] yeve silver to the povre freres.
His tipet was ay farsed[3] ful of knyves
And pinnes, for to yeven faire wyves.
And certeinly he hadde a mery note;
Wel coude he singe and pleyen on a rote.[4]
Of yeddinges[5] he bar utterly the prys.
His nekke whyt was as the flour-de-lys;
Ther-to he strong was as a champioun.
He knew the tavernes wel in every toun,
And everich hostiler and tappestere,[6]
Bet than a lazar or a beggestere;[7]
For un-to swich a worthy man as he
Acorded nat, as by his facultee,[8]
To have with seke lazars aqueyntaunce.
It is nat honest, it may nat avaunce
For to delen with no swich poraille,[9]
But al with riche and sellers of vitaille.
And over-al ther as[10] profit sholde aryse
Curteys he was, and lowly of servyse.
Ther nas no man no-wher so vertuous.
He was the beste beggere in his hous;[11]
For thogh a widwe hadde noght a sho,[12]
So plesaunt was his *'In principio,'*[13]
Yet wolde he have a ferthing, er he wente.
His purchas was wel bettre than his rente.[14]
And rage[15] he coude, as it were right a whelpe.[16]
In love-dayes[17] ther coude he muchel helpe.
For there he was nat lyk a cloisterer,[18]
With a thredbar cope, as is a povre scoler,
But he was lyk a maister or a pope.
Of double worsted was his semi-cope,[19]

1 knew he should have. 2 One should. 3 stuffed.
4 fiddle. 5 In songs. 6 bar-maid.
7 Better than he did any leper or beggar-woman.
8 It was not suitable, considering his profession.
9 poor trash. 10 And everywhere that.
11 One MS. inserts here :

And yaf a certeyn ferme for the graunt;
Noon of his bretheren cam ther in his haunt;

12 shoe. 13 *John*, i, 1, a favorite phrase with friars.
14 What he begged (*purchas*) was more than his regular income (*rent*).
15 behave violently, wantonly. 16 young dog.
17 arbitration days. 18 recluse. 19 short cape.

That rounded as a belle out of the presse.[20]
Somwhat he lipsed, for his wantownesse,
To make his English swete up-on his tonge;
And in his harping, whan that he had songe,
His eyen twinkled in his heed aright,
As doon the sterres in the frosty night.
This worthy limitour was cleped Huberd.

A MARCHANT was ther with a forked berd,
In mottelee,[21] and hye on horse he sat,
Up-on his heed a Flaundrish bever hat;
His botes clasped faire and fetisly.
His resons he spak ful solempnely,
Souninge[22] alway th'encrees of his winning.
He wolde the see were kept for any thing
Bitwixe Middelburgh and Orewelle.[23]
Wel coude he in eschaunge sheeldes selle.[24]
This worthy man ful wel his wit bisette;[25]
Ther wiste no wight that he was in dette,
So estatly was he of his governaunce,
With his bargaynes, and with his chevisaunce.[26]
For sothe he was a worthy man with-alle,
But sooth to seyn, I noot[27] how men him calle.

A CLERK ther was of Oxenford also,
That un-to logik hadde longe y-go.
As lene was his hors as is a rake,
And he nas nat right fat, I undertake;
But loked holwe, and ther-to soberly.
Ful thredbar was his overest courtepy;[28]
For he had geten him yet no benefyce,
Ne was so worldly for to have offyce.
For him was lever[29] have at his beddes heed
Twenty bokes, clad in blak or reed,
Of Aristotle and his philosophye,
Than robes riche, or fithele,[30] or gay sautrye.[31]
But al be that he was a philosophre,
Yet hadde he but litel gold in cofre;[32]
But al that he mighte of his freendes hente,[33]
On bokes and on lerninge he it spente,

20 It had been kept on a form, or clothes-press.
21 a mixed stuff. 22 Relating to.
23 He wanted the sea-route between these ports kept guarded and open at any expense.
24 sell money at exchange — very likely an illegal business.
25 employed. 26 shifts for raising money. 27 know not.
28 outermost cloak. 29 he would rather.
30 fiddle. 31 psaltery, dulcimer.
32 The alchemists, who pretended to change baser metals to gold, were also termed philosophers.
33 get.

And bisily gan for the soules preye
Of hem that yaf him wher-with to scoleye.[1]
Of studie took he most cure[2] and most hede.
Noght o word spak he more than was nede,
And that was seyd in forme and reverence,
And short and quik, and ful of hy sentence.
Souninge in[3] moral vertu was his speche,
And gladly wolde he lerne, and gladly teche.

A SERGEANT OF THE LAWE, war and wys,
That often hadde been at the parvys,[4]
Ther was also, ful riche of excellence.
Discreet he was, and of greet reverence:
He semed swich, his wordes weren so wyse.
Justyce he was ful often in assyse,
By patente, and by pleyn commissioun;
For his science, and for his heigh renoun
Of fees and robes hadde he many oon.
So greet a purchasour[5] was no-wher noon.
Al was fee simple to him in effect,[6]
His purchasing mighte nat been infect.[7]
No-wher so bisy a man as he ther nas,
And yet he semed bisier than he was.
In termes hadde he caas and domes alle,[8]
That from the tyme of king William were falle.
Therto he coude endyte, and make a thing,[9]
Ther coude no wight pinche at his wryting;
And every statut coude he pleyn by rote.
He rood but hoomly in a medlee cote[10]
Girt with a ceint[11] of silk, with barres[12] smale;
Of his array telle I no lenger tale.

A FRANKELEYN was in his companye;
Whyt was his berd, as is the dayesye.
Of his complexioun[13] he was sangwyn.
Wel loved he by the morwe[14] a sop in wyn.[15]
To liven in delyt was ever his wone,[16]
For he was Epicurus owne sone,
That heeld opinioun, that pleyn delyt
Was verraily felicitee parfyt.
An housholdere, and that a greet, was he;
Seint Julian[17] he was in his contree.

His breed, his ale, was alwey after oon;[18]
A bettre envyned[19] man was no-wher noon.
With-oute bake mete[20] was never his hous,
Of fish and flesh, and that so plentevous
It snewed[21] in his hous of mete and drinke,
Of alle deyntees that men coude thinke.
After the sondry sesons of the yeer,
So chaunged he his mete and his soper.
Ful many a fat partrich hadde he in mewe,[22]
And many a breem and many a luce in stewe.[23]
Wo[24] was his cook, but-if[25] his sauce were
Poynaunt and sharp, and redy al his gere.
His table dormant[26] in his halle alway
Stood redy covered al the longe day.
At sessiouns ther was he lord and sire;
Ful ofte tyme he was knight of the shire.
An anlas[27] and a gipser[28] al of silk
Heng at his girdel, whyt as morne milk.
A shirreve hadde he been, and a countour;[29]
Was no-wher such a worthy vavasour.[30]

An HABERDASSHER and a CARPENTER,
A WEBBE, a DYERE, and a TAPICER,[31]
Were with us eek, clothed in o liveree[32]
Of a solempne and greet fraternitee.[33]
Ful fresh and newe hir gere apyked[34] was;
Hir knyves were y-chaped[35] noght with bras,
But al with silver, wroght ful clene and weel,
Hir girdles and hir pouches every-deel.
Wel semed ech of hem a fair burgeys,
To sitten in a yeldhalle[36] on a deys.
Everich, for the wisdom that he can,
Was shaply for to been an alderman.
For catel[37] hadde they y-nogh and rente,
And eek hir wyves wolde it wel assente;
And elles certein were they to blame.
It is ful fair to been y-clept '*ma dame*,'
And goon to vigilyës[38] al bifore,
And have a mantel royalliche y-bore.

A COOK they hadde with hem for the nones,
To boille the chiknes with the marybones,
And poudre-marchant tart,[39] and galingale.[40]
Wel coude he knowe a draughte of London ale.

[1] study. [2] care. [3] Tending toward.
[4] the porch of St. Paul's, a lawyers' haunt.
[5] possibly, conveyancer.
[6] Apparently—"He could get about, bring to naught, all restrictions on land."
[7] invalidated. [8] He could cite cases precisely.
[9] compose and write out a deed, etc.
[10] coat of divers colors. [11] girdle.
[12] transverse metal bands on the girdle.
[13] temperament, as well as coloring.
[14] in the morning. [15] wine with cake or bread in it.
[16] custom. [17] Patron saint of hospitality.
[18] uniform in quality. [19] with a better wine-cellar.
[20] meat pies. [21] snowed. [22] captivity. [23] fish-pond. [24] Woeful. [25] unless. [26] a permanent dining-table—not boards on trestles. [27] dagger.
[28] pouch. [29] accountant, treasurer. [30] landholder, squire. [31] weaver, dyer, and upholsterer. [32] distinctive dress. [33] guild. [34] trimmed. [35] mounted.
[36] guildhall. [37] property [38] the eves of festivals
[39] tart flavoring-powder. [40] a spice.

He coude roste, and sethe, and broille, and frye,
Maken mortreux,[1] and wel bake a pye.
But greet harm was it, as it thoughte me,
That on his shine a mormal[2] hadde he.
For blankmanger,[3] that made he with the beste.

A SHIPMAN was ther, woning fer by weste:[4]
For aught I woot, he was of Dertemouthe.
He rood up-on a rouncy,[5] as he couthe,[6]
In a gowne of falding[7] to the knee.
A daggere hanging on a laas[8] hadde he
Aboute his nekke under his arm adoun.
The hote somer had maad his hewe al broun;
And, certeinly, he was a good felawe.
Ful many a draughte of wyn had he y-drawe
From Burdeux-ward,[9] whyl that the chapman sleep.
Of nyce conscience took he no keep.
If that he faught, and hadde the hyer hond,
By water he sente hem hoom to every lond,[10]
But of his craft to rekene wel his tydes,
His stremes and his daungers him bisydes,[11]
His herberwe[12] and his mone, his lodemenage,[13]
Ther nas noon swich from Hulle to Cartage.
Hardy he was, and wys to undertake;
With many a tempest hadde his berd been shake.
He knew wel alle the havenes, as they were,
From Gootlond[14] to the cape of Finistere,
And every cryke in Britayne and in Spayne;
His barge y-cleped was the Maudelayne.

With us ther was a DOCTOUR OF PHISYK,
In al this world ne was ther noon him lyk
To speke of phisik and of surgerye;
For he was grounded in astronomye.
He kepte his pacient a ful greet del
In houres, by his magik naturel.[15]
Wel coude he fortunen the ascendent
Of his images[16] for his pacient.
He knew the cause of everich maladye,
Were it of hoot or cold, or moiste, or drye,[17]
And where engendred, and of what humour;
He was a verrey parfit practisour.
The cause y-knowe, and of his harm the rote,
Anon he yaf the seke man his bote.[18]
Ful redy hadde he his apothecaries,
To sende him drogges and his letuaries,[19]
For ech of hem made other for to winne;
Hir frendschipe nas nat newe to biginne.
Wel knew he th'olde Esculapius,
And Deiscorides, and eek Rufus,
Old Ypocras, Haly, and Galien;
Serapion, Razis, and Avicen;
Averrois, Damascien, and Constantyn;
Bernard, and Gatesden, and Gilbertyn.[20]
Of his diete mesurable was he,
For it was of no superfluitee,
But of greet norissing and digestible.
His studie was but litel on the Bible.
In sangwin and in pers[21] he clad was al,
Lyned with taffata and with sendal,[22]
And yet he was but esy of dispence;[23]
He kepte that he wan in pestilence.
For gold in phisik is a cordial,[24]
Therfore he lovede gold in special.

A good WYF was ther of bisyde BATHE,
But she was som-del[25] deef, and that was scathe.[26]
Of clooth-making she hadde swiche an haunt,[27]
She passed hem of Ypres and of Gaunt.
In al the parisshe wyf ne was ther noon
That to th' offring bifore hir sholde goon;
And if ther dide, certeyn, so wrooth was she,
That she was out of alle charitee.
Hir coverchiefs ful fyne were of ground;[28]
I dorste swere they weyeden ten pound
That on a Sonday were upon hir heed.
Hir hosen weren of fyn scarlet reed,

[1] stews. [2] sore. [3] blanc-mange, i.e. minced, spiced chicken. [4] dwelling in the west of England. [5] an awkward nag. [6] as best he knew how. [7] coarse woollen. [8] line. [9] stolen drinks out of the casks he was bringing from Bordeaux. [10] threw them overboard. [11] near him. [12] harbor. [13] pilotage. [14] The island Gottland.

[15] By astrology he took advantage of those conjunctions of the stars which best suited his patient.

[16] He made his talismans just when the stars were most propitious. An ascendant is the degree of the zodiac at which a star rises above the eastern horizon.

[17] The four qualities of the body. [18] remedy. [19] electuary, syrup.

[20] All great medical authorities, the last two being Englishmen, and Bernard a Scot.

[21] blood-red and sky-blue. [22] thin silk. [23] a small spender. [24] Tincture of gold was used to strengthen the heart. [25] somewhat. [26] a shame. [27] knack. [28] weave.

Ful streite y-teyd, and shoos ful moiste and newe.
Bold was hir face, and fair, and reed of hewe.
She was a worthy womman al hir lyve,
Housbondes at chirche-dore[1] she hadde fyve,
Withouten other companye in youthe;
But therof nedeth nat to speke as nouthe.[2]
And thryes hadde she been at Jerusalem;
She hadde passed many a straunge streem;
At Rome she hadde been, and at Boloigne,
In Galice at seint Jame,[3] and at Coloigne.
She coude muche of wandring by the weye:
Gat-tothed[4] was she, soothly for to seye.
Up-on an amblere[5] esily she sat,
Y-wimpled[6] wel, and on hir heed an hat
As brood as is a bokeler or a targe;
A foot-mantel aboute hir hipes large,
And on hir feet a paire of spores sharpe.
In felawschip wel coude she laughe and carpe.[7]
Of remedyes of love she knew perchaunce,
For she coude of that art the olde daunce.[8]

A good man was ther of religioun,
And was a povre PERSOUN[9] of a toun;
But riche he was of holy thoght and werk.
He was also a lerned man, a clerk,
That Cristes gospel trewely wolde preche;
His parisshens[10] devoutly wolde he teche.
Benigne he was, and wonder diligent,
And in adversitee ful pacient;
And swich he was y-preved ofte sythes.
Ful looth were him to cursen for his tythes,
But rather wolde he yeven, out of doute,
Un-to his povre parisshens aboute
Of his offring, and eek of his substaunce.
He coude in litel thing han suffisaunce.
Wyd was his parisshe, and houses fer a-sonder,
But he ne lafte nat, for reyn ne thonder,
In siknes nor in meschief, to visyte
The ferreste in his parisshe, muche and lyte,
Up-on his feet, and in his hand a staf.
This noble ensample to his sheep he yaf,
That first he wroghte, and afterward he taughte;
Out of the gospel[11] he tho wordes caughte;
And this figure he added eek ther-to,
That if gold ruste, what shal iren do?
For if a preest be foul, on whom we truste,
No wonder is a lewed man to ruste;
And shame it is, if a preest take keep,[12]
A shiten shepherde and a clene sheep.
Wel oghte a preest ensample for to yive,
By his clennesse, how that his sheep shold live.
He sette nat his benefice to hyre,
And leet his sheep encombred in the myre,
And ran to London, un-to sëynt Poules,
To seken him a chaunterie for soules,[13]
Or with a bretherhed to been withholde;[14]
But dwelte at hoom, and kepte wel his folde,
So that the wolf ne made it nat miscarie;
He was a shepherde and no mercenarie.
And though he holy were, and vertuous,
He was to simple man nat despitous,
Ne of his speche daungerous ne digne,[15]
But in his teching discreet and benigne.
To drawen folk to heven by fairnesse
By good ensample, was his bisinesse:
But it were any persone obstinat,
What-so he were, of heigh or lowe estat,
Him wolde he snibben[16] sharply for the nones.
A bettre preest, I trowe that nowher noon is.
He wayted after no pompe and reverence,
Ne maked him a spyced conscience,
But Cristes lore, and his apostles twelve,
He taughte, and first he folwed it him-selve.

With him ther was a PLOWMAN, was his brother,
That hadde y-lad of dong ful many a fother,[17]
A trewe swinker[18] and a good was he,
Livinge in pees and parfit charitee.
God loved he best with al his hole herte
At alle tymes, thogh him gamed or smerte,[19]
And thanne his neighebour right as him-selve.
He wolde thresshe, and ther-to dyke and delve,
For Cristes sake, for every povre wight,
Withouten hyre, if it lay in his might,

[1] The ceremony was at the door.
[2] just now. [3] Compostella in Spain.
[4] With gaps between her teeth; or else goat-toothed, i.e. lascivious. [5] ambling nag. [6] With a pleated hood. [7] joke. [8] tricks. [9] Parson. [10] parishioners. [11] *Matthew*, v, 19.
[12] heed.
[13] At St. Paul's were thirty-five chantries, where fifty-four priests said masses for the repose of souls.
[14] to be a guild chaplain. [15] haughty. [16] snub.
[17] load. [18] worker. [19] though he had good fortune or bad.

His tythes payed he ful faire and wel,
Bothe of his propre swink and his catel.[1]
In a tabard [2] he rood upon a mere.
Ther was also a Reve and a Millere,
A Somnour [3] and a Pardoner [4] also,
A Maunciple,[5] and my-self; ther were namo.
The MILLER was a stout carl, for the nones,
Ful big he was of braun, and eek of bones;
That proved wel [6] for over-al ther he cam,
At wrastling he wolde have alwey the ram.[7]
He was short-shouldred,[8] brood, a thikke knarre,[9]
Ther nas na dore that he nolde heve of harre,[10]
Or breke it, at a renning, with his heed.
His berd as any sowe or fox was reed,
And ther-to brood, as though it were a spade.
Up-on the cop [11] right of his nose he hade
A werte, and ther-on stood a tuft of heres,
Reed as the bristles of a sowe's eres;
His nose-thirles [12] blake were and wyde.
A swerd and bokeler bar he by his syde;
His mouth as greet was as a greet forneys.
He was a janglere [13] and a goliardeys,[14]
And that was most of sinne and harlotryes.[15]
Wel coude he stelen corn, and tollen thryes;[16]
And yet he hadde a thombe of gold,[17] pardee.
A whyte cote and a blew hood wered he.
A baggepype wel coude he blowe and sowne,
And ther-with-al he broghte us out of towne.
A gentil MAUNCIPLE was ther of a temple,[18]
Of which achatours [19] mighte take exemple
For to be wyse in bying of vitaille
For whether that he payde, or took by taille,[20]

[1] by working himself and by giving of his property.
[2] peasants' sleeveless coat.
[3] A summoner cited culprits before the ecclesiastical court. [4] A pardoner hawked indulgences. [5] steward, caterer. [6] was certainly so. [7] the prize. [8] short in the upper arm. [9] chunk of a man. [10] hinge. [11] tip. [12] nostrils. [13] chatterer. [14] teller of indecent stories. [15] wicked pranks. [16] take triple toll.
[17] Probably because it was expert in judging the fineness of his flour. The phrase was proverbial.
[18] college of lawyers. [19] purchasers.
[20] on credit, i.e. by tally.

Algate [21] he wayted so in his achat,[22]
That he was ay biforn and in good stat.
Now is nat that of God a ful fair grace,
That swich a lewed mannes wit shal pace
The wisdom of an heep of lerned men?
Of maistres hadde he mo than thryes ten,
That were of lawe expert and curious;
Of which ther were a doseyn in that hous
Worthy to been stiwardes of rente and lond
Of any lord that is in Engelond,
To make him live by his propre good,
In honour dettelees, but he were wood,[23]
Or live as scarsly as him list desire;
And able for to helpen al a shire
In any cas that mighte falle or happe;
And yit this maunciple sette hir aller cappe.[24]
The REVE was a sclendre colerik man,
His berd was shave as ny as ever he can.
His heer was by his eres round y-shorn.
His top was dokked lyk a preest biforn.[25]
Ful longe were his legges, and ful lene,
Y-lyk a staf, ther was no calf y-sene.
Wel coude he kepe a gerner and a binne;
Ther was noon auditour coude on him winne.[26]
Wel wiste he, by the droghte, and by the reyn,
The yelding of his seed, and of his greyn.
His lordes sheep, his neet,[27] his dayerye,
His swyn, his hors, his stoor,[28] and his pultrye,
Was hoolly in this reves governing,
And by his covenaunt yaf the rekening,
Sin that his lord was twenty yeer of age;
Ther coude no man bringe him in arrearage.[29]
Ther nas baillif, ne herde,[30] ne other hyne,[31]
That he ne knew his sleighte and his covyne;[32]
They were adrad of him, as of the deeth.
His woning [33] was ful fair up-on an heeth,
With grene treës shadwed was his place.
He coude bettre than his lord purchace.
Ful riche he was astored prively,
His lord wel coude he plesen subtilly,

[21] At any rate. [22] purchase. [23] unless he was crazy.
[24] fooled them all; "aller" is an old genitive plural, A. S. *ealra*.
[25] His hair was cut short across the front, like a priest's.
[26] get the better of him. [27] cattle. [28] farm stock.
[29] catch him in arrears. [30] herdsman. [31] farm servant. [32] trickery. [33] dwelling.

To yeve and lene him of his owne good,
And have a thank, and yet a cote and hood.
In youthe he lerned hadde a good mister,[1]
He was wel good wrighte, a carpenter.
This reve sat up-on a ful good stot,[2]
That was al pomely grey,[3] and highte Scot.
A long surcote of pers up-on he hade,
And by his syde he bar a rusty blade.
Of Northfolk was this reve, of which I telle,
Bisyde a toun men clepen Baldeswelle.
Tukked he was, as is a frere, aboute,
And ever he rood the hindreste of our route.

A Somnour was ther with us in that place,
That hadde a fyr-reed cherubinnes face,
For sawcefleem[4] he was, with eyen narwe.
As hoot he was, and lecherous, as a sparwe;
With scalled[5] browes blake, and piled[6] berd;
Of his visage children were aferd.
Ther nas quik-silver, litarge,[7] ne brimstoon,
Boras, ceruce,[8] ne oille of tartre noon,
Ne oynement that wolde clense and byte,
That him mighte helpen of his whelkes whyte,
Nor of the knobbes sittinge on his chekes.
Wel loved he garleek, onyons, and eek lekes,
And for to drinken strong wyn, reed as blood.
Than wolde he speke, and crye as he were wood,
And whan that he wel dronken hadde the wyn,
Than wolde he speke no word but Latyn.
A fewe termes hadde he, two or three,
That he had lerned out of some decree;
No wonder is, he herde it al the day;
And eek ye knowen wel, how that a jay
Can clepen 'Watte,'[9] as well as can the pope.
But who-so coude in other thing him grope,[10]
Thanne hadde he spent al his philosophye;
Ay '*Questio quid iuris*,'[11] wolde he crye.
He was a gentil harlot[12] and a kinde;
A bettre felawe sholde men noght finde.
He wolde suffre, for a quart of wyn,
A good felawe to have his concubyn
A twelf-month, and excuse him atte fulle:
Ful prively a finch eek coude he pulle.[13]
And if he fond o-wher a good felawe,
He wolde techen him to have non awe,
In swich cas, of the erchedeknes curs,
But-if a mannes soule were in his purs;
For in his purs he sholde y-punisshed be.
'Purs is the erchedeknes helle,' seyde he.
But wel I woot he lyed right in dede;
Of cursing oghte ech gilty man him drede —
For curs wol slee, right as assoilling saveth —
And also war him of a *significavit*.[14]
In daunger[15] hadde he at his owne gyse
The yonge girles[16] of the diocyse,
And knew hir counseil, and was al hir reed.
A gerland hadde he set up-on his heed,
As greet as it were for an ale-stake,[17]
A bokeler hadde he maad him of a cake.

With him ther rood a gentil Pardoner
Of Rouncival,[18] his freend and his compeer,
That streight was comen fro the court of Rome.
Ful loude he song, 'Com hider, love, to me.'
This somnour bar to him a stif burdoun,[19]
Was never trompe of half so greet a soun.
This pardoner hadde heer as yelow as wex,
But smothe it heng, as dooth a strike[20] of flex;
By ounces[21] henge his lokkes thet he hadde,
And ther-with he his shuldres overspradde;
But thinne it lay, by colpons[22] oon and oon;[23]
But hood, for jolitee, ne wered he noon,
For it was trussed up in his walet.
Him thoughte,[24] he rood al of the newe jet,[25]
Dischevele, save his cappe, he rood al bare.
Swiche glaringe eyen hadde he as an hare.
A vernicle[26] hadde he sowed on his cappe.
His walet lay biforn him in his lappe,

1 trade. 2 cob. 3 dapple gray. 4 pimpled. 5 scabby. 6 thin. 7 ointment prepared from protoxide of lead. 8 white-lead.
9 i.e. Walter. Jays were called Wat as parrots are called Polly, and it was a mediæval joke to teach them to say "Wat shrew," cursing themselves.
10 test. 11 "What 's the law here?" 12 rogue.
13 fleece a gull. 14 A writ of excommunication. 15 Within his power. 16 youth of either sex. 17 Sign of an ale-house. 18 The name of a hospital in Charing. 19 bass. 20 hank. 21 small portions. 22 shreds. 23 here and there. 24 It seemed to him. 25 the latest fashion.
26 Miniature of St. Veronica's handkerchief with the face of Christ — a token of his having been at Rome.

Bret-ful[1] of pardoun come from Rome al hoot.
A voys he hadde as small as hath a goot.
No berd hadde he, never sholde have,
As smothe it was as it were late y-shave;
I trowe he were a gelding or a mare.
But of his craft, fro Berwik into Ware,
Ne was ther swich another pardoner.
For in his male[2] he hadde a pilwe-beer,[3]
Which that he seyde was our lady veyl:
He seyde he hadde a gobet of the seyl
That sëynt Peter hadde, whan that he wente
Up-on the see, til Jesu Crist him hente.
He hadde a croys of latoun,[4] ful of stones,
And in a glas he hadde pigges bones.
But with thise relikes, whan that he fond
A povre person dwelling up-on lond,
Up-on a day he gat him more moneye
Than that the person gat in monthes tweye.
And thus, with feyned flaterye and japes,
He made the person and the peple his apes.
But trewely to tellen, atte laste
He was in chirche a noble ecclesiaste.
Wel coude he rede a lessoun or a storie,
But alderbest[5] he song an offertorie;
For wel he wiste, whan that song was songe,
He moste[6] preche, and wel affyle[7] his tonge,
To winne silver, as he ful wel coude;
Therefore he song so meriely and loude.

Now have I told you shortly, in a clause,
Th'estat, th'array, the nombre, and eek the cause
Why that assembled was this companye
In Southwerk, at this gentil hostelrye,
That highte the Tabard, faste by the Belle.
But now is tyme to yow for to telle
How that we baren us that ilke night,
Whan we were in that hostelrye alight.
And after wol I telle of our viage,
And al the remenaunt of our pilgrimage.
But first I pray yow, of your curteisye,
That ye n'arette[8] it nat my vileinye,
Thogh that I pleynly speke in this matere,
To telle yow hir wordes and hir chere;
Ne thogh I speke hir wordes properly.
For this ye knowen al-so wel as I,

[1] Brim-full. [2] mail, wallet. [3] pillowslip. [4] a metal compounded chiefly of copper and zinc. [5] best of all. [6] might. [7] polish. [8] reckon.

Who-so shal telle a tale after a man,
He moot reherce, as ny as ever he can,
Everich a word, if it be in his charge,
Al speke he never so rudeliche and large;[9]
Or elles he moot telle his tale untrewe,
Or feyne thing, or finde wordes newe.
He may nat spare, al-thogh he were his brother;
He moot as wel seye o word as another.
Crist spak him-self ful brode in holy writ,
And wel ye woot, no vileinye is it.
Eek Plato seith,[10] who-so that can him rede,
The wordes mote be cosin to the dede.
Also I prey yow to foryeve it me,
Al have I nat set folk in hir degree[11]
Here in this tale, as that they sholde stonde;
My wit is short, ye may wel understonde.
Greet chere made our hoste us everichon,
And to the soper sette us anon;
And served us with vitaille at the beste.
Strong was the wyn, and wel to drinke us leste.[12]
A semely man our hoste was with-alle
For to han been a marshal in an halle;
A large man he was with eyen stepe,[13]
A fairer burgeys is ther noon in Chepe:[14]
Bold of his speche, and wys, and wel y-taught,
And of manhod him lakkede right naught.
Eek therto he was right a mery man,
And after soper pleyen he bigan,
And spak of mirthe amonges othere thinges,
Whan that we hadde maad our rekeninges;
And seyde thus: 'Now, lordinges, trewely,
Ye been to me right welcome hertely:
For by my trouthe, if that I shal nat lye,
I ne saugh this yeer so mery a companye
At ones in this herberwe as is now.
Fayn wolde I doon yow mirthe, wiste I how.
And of a mirthe I am right now bithoght,
To doon yow ese, and it shal coste noght.
'Ye goon to Caunterbury; God yow spede,
The blisful martir quyte yow your mede.
And wel I woot, as ye goon by the weye,
Ye shapen yow to talen[15] and to pleye;
For trewely, confort ne mirthe is noon
To ryde by the weye doumb as a stoon;

[9] freely.
[10] Boethius, bk. III, prose 12; Plato's *Timaeus*, 29 B.
[11] in order of precedence.
[12] we were disposed — *leste* is Kentish dialect.
[13] prominent. [14] Cheapside. [15] tell stories.

And therfore wol I maken yow disport,
As I seyde erst,[1] and doon yow som confort.
And if yow lyketh alle, by oon assent,
Now for to stonden at my jugement,
And for to werken as I shal yow seye,
To-morwe, whan ye ryden by the weye,
Now, by my fader[2] soule, that is deed,
But ye be merye, I wol yeve yow myn heed.
Hold up your hond, withouten more speche.'
Our counseil was nat longe for to seche;[3]
Us thoughte it was noght worth to make it wys,[4]
And graunted him withouten more avys,
And bad him seye his verdit, as him leste.
'Lordinges,' quod he, 'now herkneth for the beste;
But tak it not, I prey yow, in desdeyn;
This is the poynt, to speken short and pleyn,
That ech of yow, to shorte with your weye,
In this viage, shal telle tales tweye,
To Caunterbury-ward, I mene it so,
And hom-ward he shal tellen othere two,[5]
Of aventures that whylom han bifalle.
And which of yow that bereth him best of alle,
That is to seyn, that telleth in this cas
Tales of best sentence and most solas,[6]
Shal have a soper at our aller cost[7]
Here in this place, sitting by this post,
Whan that we come agayn fro Caunterbury.
And for to make yow the more mery,
I wol my-selven gladly with yow ryde,
Right at myn owne cost, and be your gyde.
And who-so wol my jugement withseye
Shal paye al that we spenden by the weye.
And if ye vouche-sauf that it be so,
Tel me anon, with-outen wordes mo,[8]
And I wol erly shape[9] me therfore.'
This thing was graunted, and our othes swore
With ful glad herte, and preyden him also
That he wold vouche-sauf for to do so,
And that he wolde been our governour,
And of our tales juge and reportour,
And sette a soper at a certeyn prys;
And we wold reuled been at his devys,
In heigh and lowe;[10] and thus, by oon assent,
We been acorded to his jugement.
And ther-up-on the wyn was fet[11] anon;
We dronken, and to reste wente echon,
With-outen any lenger taryinge.
A-morwe, whan that day bigan to springe,
Up roos our host, and was our aller cok,[12]
And gadrede us togidre, alle in a flok,
And forth we riden, a litel more than pas,[13]
Un-to the watering of seint Thomas.[14]
And there our host bigan his hors areste,
And seyde; 'Lordinges, herkneth, if yow leste.
Ye woot your forward,[15] and I it yow recorde.
If even-song and morwe-song acorde,[16]
Lat see now who shal telle the firste tale.
As ever mote I drinke wyn or ale,
Who-so be rebel to my jugement
Shal paye for al that by the weye is spent.
Now draweth cut,[17] er that we ferrer twinne;[18]
He which that hath the shortest shal biginne.
Sire knight,' quod he, 'my maister and my lord,
Now draweth[19] cut, for that is myn acord.
Cometh[19] neer,' quod he, 'my lady prioresse;
And ye, sir clerk, lat be your shamfastnesse,
Ne studieth[19] noght; ley hond to, every man.'
Anon to drawen every wight bigan.
And shortly for to tellen, as it was,
Were it by aventure, or sort, or cas,[20]
The sothe is this, the cut fil to the knight,
Of which ful blythe and glad was every wight;
And telle he moste his tale, as was resoun,
By forward and by composicioun,[21]
As ye han herd; what nedeth wordes mo?
And whan this gode man saugh it was so,
As he that wys was and obedient
To kepe his forward by his free assent,
He seyde: 'Sin I shal beginne the game,
What, welcome be the cut, a Goddes name!

1 before. 2 Genitive — A.S. *faeder*.
3 we were soon agreed.
4 it seemed to us not worth while to make a fuss.
5 Some would throw out these two lines.
6 of the best sentiments, and the most entertaining.
7 at the cost of all of us; our and aller are genitive plurals — A.S. *ūre ealra*.
8 more. — A.S. *mā*; Shakespeare, *moe*.
9 make my arrangements.
10 wholly. 11 fetched. 12 the cock who waked us all. 13 faster than a walk. 14 A watering-place for horses two miles out. 15 agreement.
16 If you sing the same tune now that you did last night.
17 lots. 18 draw farther from town. 19 Polite imperative plurals. 20 by hap, or fate, or chance.
21 promise and agreement.

Now lat us ryde, and herkneth what I seye.'
And with that word we riden forth our weye;
And he bigan with right a mery chere
His tale anon, and seyde in this manere.

THE KNIGHT'S TALE

Jamque domos patrias, Scithice post aspera gentis Prelia, laurigero, etc. [Statius, *Theb.* XII, 519.][1]

Whylom, as olde stories tellen us,
Ther was a duk that highte Theseus;
Of Athenes he was lord and governour,
And in his tyme swich a conquerour
That gretter was ther noon under the sonne.
Ful many a riche contree hadde he wonne;
What with his wisdom and his chivalrye,
He conquered al the regne[2] of Femenye,
That whylom was y-cleped Scithia;
And weddede the quene Ipolita,
And broghte hir hoom with him in his contree
With muchel glorie and greet solempnitee,
And eek hir yonge suster Emelye.
And thus with victorie and with melodye
Lete I this noble duk to Athenes ryde,
And al his hoost in armes him bisyde.
And certes, if it nere to long to here,
I wolde han told yow fully the manere
How wonnen was the regne of Femenye
By Theseus, and by his chivalrye;
And of the grete bataille for the nones[3]
Bitwixen Athenës and Amazones;
And how asseged was Ipolita,
The faire, hardy quene of Scithia;
And of the feste that was at his weddinge,
And of the tempest at his hoom-cominge;
But al that thing I moot[4] as now forbere.
I have, God woot, a large field to ere,[5]
And wayke been the oxen in my plough.
The remenant of the tale is long y-nough.
I wol nat letten[6] eek noon of this route;
Lat every felawe telle his tale aboute,
And lat see now who shal the soper winne;
And ther I lefte, I wol ageyn biginne.
This duk, of whom I make mencioun,
When he was come almost unto the toun,
In al his wele[7] and in his moste pryde,
He was war, as he caste his eye asyde,

Wher that ther kneled in the hye weye
A compunye of ladies, tweye and tweye,
Ech after other, clad in clothes blake;
But swich a cry and swich a wo they make,
That in this world nis creature livinge
That herde swich another weymentinge;[8]
And of this cry they nolde never stenten,[9]
Til they the reynes of his brydel henten.[10]
'What folk ben ye, that at myn hoomcominge
Perturben so my feste with cryinge?'
Quod Theseus. 'Have ye so greet envye
Of myn honour, that thus compleyne and crye?
Or who hath yow misboden,[11] or offended?
And telleth me if it may been amended;
And why that ye ben clothed thus in blak?'
The eldest lady of hem alle spak,
When she hadde swowned with a deedly chere,
That it was routhe for to seen and here,
And seyde: 'Lord, to whom Fortune hath yiven
Victorie, and as a conquerour to liven,
Noght greveth us your glorie and your honour;
But we biseken mercy and socour.
Have mercy on our wo and our distresse.
Som drope of pitee, thurgh thy gentilesse,
Up-on us wrecched wommen lat thou falle.
For certes, lord, ther nis noon of us alle
That she nath been a duchesse or a quene;
Now be we caitifs, as it is wel sene:
Thanked be Fortune, and hir false wheel,
That noon estat assureth to be weel.
And certes, lord, t'abyden your presence,
Here in the temple of the goddesse Clemence
We han ben waytinge al this fourtenight;
Now help us, lord, sith it is in thy might.
I wrecche, which that wepe and waille thus,
Was whylom wyf to king Capaneus,
That starf at Thebes, cursed be that day!
And alle we, that been in this array,
And maken al this lamentacioun,
We losten alle our housbondes at that toun,
Whyl that the sege ther-aboute lay.
And yet now th'olde Creon, weylaway!
The lord is now of Thebes the citee,
Fulfild of ire and of iniquitee,

[1] The *Knight's Tale* is a free adaptation of Boccaccio's *Teseide*, a much longer poem. Both are based after a fashion on the *Thebaiad* of the late Roman poet, Statius.
[2] realm. [3] for the nonce — a colorless phrase.
[4] must. [5] plough. [6] hinder. [7] weal, well-being.
[8] lament. [9] stint, stop. [10] seized. [11] injured.

He, for despyt, and for his tirannye,
To do the dede bodyes vileinye,
Of alle our lordes, whiche that ben slawe,[1]
Hath all the bodyes on an heep y-drawe,
And wol nat suffren hem, by noon assent,
Neither to been y-buried nor y-brent,[2]
But maketh houndes ete hem in despyt.'
And with that word, with-outen more respyt,
They fillen gruf,[3] and cryden piteously,
'Have on us wrecched wommen som mercy,
And lat our sorwe sinken in thyn herte.'
This gentil duk doun from his courser sterte
With herte pitous, whan he herde hem speke.
Him thoughte that his herte wolde breke,
Whan he saugh hem so pitous and so mat,[4]
That whylom weren of so greet estat.
And in his armes he hem alle up hente,
And hem conforteth in ful good entente;
And swoor his ooth, as he was trewe knight,
He wolde doon so ferforthly his might
Up-on the tyraunt Creon hem to wreke,
That al the peple of Grece sholde speke
How Creon was of Theseus y-served,
As he that hadde his deeth ful wel deserved.
And right anoon, with-outen more abood,
His baner he desplayeth, and forth rood
To Thebes-ward, and al his host bisyde;
No neer Athenës wolde he go ne ryde,
Ne take his ese fully half a day,
But onward on his wey that night he lay;
And sente anoon Ipolita the quene,
And Emelye hir yonge suster shene,[5]
Un-to the toun of Athenës to dwell;
And forth he rit,[6] ther nis namore to telle.
The rede statue of Mars, with spere and targe,
So shyneth in his whyte baner large,
That alle the feeldes gliteren up and doun;
And by his baner born is his penoun[7]
Of gold ful riche, in which ther was y-bete[8]
The Minotaur, which that he slough in Crete.
Thus rit this duk, thus rit this conquerour,
And in his host of chivalrye the flour,
Til that he cam to Thebes, and alighte
Faire in a feeld, ther as he thoghte fighte.

But shortly for to speken of this thing,
With Creon, which that was of Thebes king,
He faught, and slough him manly as a knight
In pleyn bataille, and putte the folk to flight;
And by assaut he wan the citee after,
And rente adoun bothe wal, and sparre, and rafter;
And to the ladyes he restoreth agayn
The bones of hir housbondes that were slayn,
To doon obsequies as was tho the gyse.
But it were al to long for to devyse
The grete clamour and the waymentinge
That the ladyes made at the brenninge
Of the bodyes, and the grete honour
That Theseus, the noble conquerour,
Doth to the ladyes, whan they from him wente;
But shortly for to telle is myn entente.
Whan that this worthy duk, this Theseus,
Hath Creon slayn, and wonne Thebes thus,
Stille in that feelde he took al night his reste,
And dide with al the contree as him leste.[9]
To ransake in the tas[10] of bodyes dede,
Hem for to strepe of harneys and of wede,
The pilours[11] diden bisinesse and cure,[12]
After the bataille and disconfiture.
And so bifel, that in the tas they founde,
Thurgh-girt[13] with many a grevous blody wounde,
Two yonge knightes ligging by and by,[14]
Bothe in oon armes,[15] wroght ful richely,
Of whiche two, Arcita hight that oon,
And that other knight hight Palamon.
Nat fully quike, ne fully dede they were,
But by hir cote-armures, and by hir gere,
The heraudes knewe hem best in special,
As they that weren of the blood royal
Of Thebes, and of sustren two y-born.
Out of the tas the pilours han hem torn,
And han hem caried softe un-to the tente
Of Theseus, and he ful son hem sente
To Athenës, to dwellen in prisoun
Perpetuelly, he nolde no raunsoun.
And whan this worthy duk hath thus y-don,
He took his host, and hoom he rood anon

[1] slain. [2] burned. [3] groveling, prone. [4] overcome. [5] fair. [6] rideth. [7] The pennon is triangular or swallow-tailed, the banner square. [8] embroidered. [9] list, pleased (impersonal). [10] heap. [11] pillagers. [12] care. [13] pierced. [14] lying close together. [15] bearing the same coat-of-arms.

With laurer crowned as a conquerour;
And there he liveth, in joye and in honour,
Terme of his lyf; what nedeth wordes mo?
And in a tour, in angwish and in wo,
Dwellen this Palamoun and eek Arcite,
For evermore, ther may no gold hem quyte.
This passeth yeer by yeer, and day by day,
Til it fil ones, in a morwe of May,
That Emelye, that fairer was to sene
Than is the lilie upon his stalke grene,
And fressher than the May with floures newe—
For with the rose colour stroof hir hewe,
I noot[1] which was the fairer of hem two—
Er it were day, as was hir wone[2] to do,
She was arisen, and al redy dight;
For May wol have no slogardye a-night.
The sesoun priketh every gentil herte,
And maketh him out of his sleep to sterte,
And seith, 'Arys, and do thyn observaunce.'
This maked Emelye have remembraunce
To doon honour to May, and for to ryse.
Y-clothed was she fresh, for to devyse;
Hir yelow heer was broyded in a tresse,
Bihinde hir bak, a yerde long, I gesse.
And in the gardin, at the sonne up-riste,[3]
She walketh up and doun, and as hir liste
She gadereth floures, party whyte and rede,
To make a sotil gerland for hir hede,
And as an aungel hevenly she song.
The grete tour, that was so thikke and strong,
Which of the castel was the chief dongeoun,
(Ther-as the knightes weren in prisoun,
Of whiche I tolde yow, and tellen shal)
Was evene joynant to the gardin-wal
Ther as this Emelye hadde hir pleyinge.
Bright was the sonne, and cleer that morweninge,
And Palamon, this woful prisoner,
As was his wone, by leve of his gayler,
Was risen, and romed in a chambre on heigh,
In which he al the noble citee seigh,[4]
And eek the gardin, ful of braunches grene,
Ther-as this fresshe Emelye the shene
Was in hir walk, and romed up and doun.
This sorweful prisoner, this Palamoun,
Goth in the chambre, roming to and fro,
And to him-self compleyning of his wo;
That he was born, ful ofte he seyde, 'alas!'
And so bifel, by aventure or cas,
That thurgh a window, thikke of many a barre
Of yren greet, and square as any sparre,
He caste his eye upon Emelya,
And ther-with-al he bleynte,[5] and cryde 'a!'
As though he stongen were un-to the herte.
And with that cry Arcite anon up-sterte,
And seyde, 'Cosin myn, what eyleth thee,
That art so pale and deedly on to see?
Why crydestow? Who hath thee doon offence?
For Goddes love, tak al in pacience
Our prisoun, for it may non other be;
Fortune hath yeven us this adversitee.
Some wikke aspect or disposicioun
Of Saturne, by sum constellacioun,
Hath yeven us this, al-though we hadde it sworn;[6]
So stood the heven whan that we were born;
We moste endure it: this is the short and pleyn.'
This Palamon answerde, and seyde ageyn,
'Cosyn, for sothe, of this opinioun
Thou hast a veyn imaginacioun.
This prison caused me nat for to crye.
But I was hurt right now thurgh-out myn yë
In-to myn herte, that wol my bane be.
The fairnesse of that lady that I see
Yond in the gardin romen to and fro,
Is cause of al my crying and my wo.
I noot wher[7] she be womman or goddesse;
But Venus is it, soothly, as I gesse.'
And ther-with-al on kneës doun he fil,
And seyde: 'Venus, if it be thy wil
Yow in this gardin thus to transfigure
Bifore me, sorweful wrecche creature,
Out of this prisoun help that we may scapen.
And if so be my destinee be shapen
By eterne word to dyen in prisoun,
Of our linage have som compassioun,
That is so lowe y-broght by tirannye.'
And with that word Arcite gan espye
Wher-as this lady romed to and fro.
And with that sighte hir beautee hurte him so,
That, if that Palamon was wounded sore,
Arcite is hurte as muche as he, or more.
And with a sigh he seyde pitously:
'The fresshe beautee sleeth me sodeynly

[1] know not. [2] wont. [3] uprising. [4] saw. [5] blenched. [6] sworn the contrary. [7] whether.

Of hir that rometh in the yonder place;
And, but I have hir mercy and hir grace,
That I may seen hir atte leeste weye,
I nam but deed; ther nis namore to seye.'
This Palamon, whan he tho wordes herde,
Dispitously [1] he loked, and answerde:
'Whether seistow this in ernest or in pley?'
'Nay,' quod Arcite, 'in ernest, by my fey!
God help me so, me list ful yvele pleye.'
This Palamon gan knitte his browes tweye:
'It nere,' quod he, 'to thee no greet honour
For to be fals, ne for to be traytour
To me, that am thy cosin and thy brother [2]
Y-sworn ful depe, and ech of us til other,
That never, for to dyen in the peyne,[3]
Til that the deeth departe shal us tweyne,
Neither of us in love to hindren other,
Ne in non other cas, my leve [4] brother;
But that thou sholdest trewely forthren me
In every cas, and I shal forthren thee.
This was thyn ooth, and myn also, certeyn;
I wot right wel, thou darst it nat withseyn.
Thus artow of my counseil, out of doute.
And now thou woldest falsly been aboute
To love my lady, whom I love and serve,
And ever shal, til that myn herte sterve.[5]
Now certes, fals Arcite, thou shalt nat so.
I loved hir first, and tolde thee my wo
As to my counseil, and my brother sworn
To forthre me, as I have told biforn,
For which thou art y-bounden as a knight
To helpen me, if it lay in thy might,
Or elles artow fals, I dar wel seyn.'
This Arcitë ful proudly spak ageyn,
'Thou shalt,' quod he, 'be rather fals than I;
But thou art fals, I telle thee utterly;
For *par amour* [6] I loved hir first er thow.
What wiltow seyn? Thou wistest nat yet now
Whether she be a womman or goddesse!
Thyn is affeccioun of holinesse,
And myn is love, as to a creature;
For which I tolde thee myn aventure
As to my cosin, and my brother sworn.
I pose,[7] that thou lovedest hir biforn;
Wostow nat wel the olde clerkes sawe,
That "who shal yeve a lover any lawe?"
Love is a greter lawe, by my pan,[8]
Than may be yeve to any erthly man.
And therefore positif lawe and swich decree
Is broke al-day for love, in ech degree.
A man moot nedes love, maugree [9] his heed.
He may nat fleen it, thogh he sholde be deed,
Al be she mayde, or widwe, or elles wyf.
And eek it is nat lykly, al thy lyf,
To stonden in hir grace; namore shal I;
For wel thou woost thy-selven, verraily,
That thou and I be dampned to prisoun
Perpetuelly; us gayneth [10] no raunsoun.
We stryve as dide the houndes for the boon,
They foughte al day, and yet hir part was noon;
Ther cam a kyte, whyl that they were wrothe,
And bar awey the boon bitwixe hem bothe.
And therefore, at the kinges court, my brother,
Ech man for him-self, ther is non other.
Love if thee list; for I love and ay shal;
And soothly, leve brother, this is al.
Here in this prisoun mote we endure,
And everich of us take his aventure.'
Greet was the stryf and long bitwixe hem tweye,
If that I hadde leyser for to seye;
But to th'effect. It happed on a day,
(To telle it yow as shortly as I may)
A worthy duk that highte Perotheus,
That felawe was un-to duk Theseus
Sin thilke day that they were children lyte,[11]
Was come to Athenes, his felawe to visyte,
And for to pleye, as he was wont to do,
For in this world he loved no man so:
And he loved him as tendrely ageyn.
So wel they loved, as olde bokes seyn,
That whan that oon was deed, sothly to telle,
His felawe wente and soghte him doun in helle;
But of that story list me nat to wryte.
Duk Perotheus loved wel Arcite,
And hadde him knowe at Thebes yeer by yere;
And fynally, at requeste and preyere
Of Perotheus, with-oute any raunsoun,
Duk Theseus him leet out of prisoun,
Freely to goon, wher that him liste over-al,
In swich a gyse, as I you tellen shal.

[1] Savagely. [2] sworn brother in arms. [3] though we should die by torture. [4] dear, lief. [5] die. [6] in the way of a lover. [7] put the case. [8] skull, head. [9] maugre, in spite of. [10] profits. [11] little.

This was the forward, pleynly for t'endyte,
Bitwixen Theseus and him Arcite:
That if so were that Arcite were y-founde
Ever in his lyf, by day or night or stounde[1]
In any contree of this Theseus,
And he were caught, it was acorded thus,
That with a swerd he sholde lese his heed;
Ther nas non other remedye ne reed,[2]
But taketh his leve, and homward he him spedde;
Let him be war, his nekke lyth to wedde![3]
How greet a sorwe suffreth now Arcite!
The deeth he feleth thurgh his herte smyte;
He wepeth, wayleth, cryeth pitously;
To sleen him-self he wayteth prively.
He seyde, 'Allas that day that I was born!
Now is my prison worse than biforn;
Now is me shape eternally to dwelle
Noght in purgatorie, but in helle,
Allas! that ever knew I Perotheus!
For elles hadde I dwelled with Theseus
Y-fetered in his prisoun ever-mo.
Than hadde I been in blisse, and nat in wo.
Only the sighte of hir, whom that I serve,
Though that I never hir grace may deserve,
Wolde han suffised right y-nough for me.
O dere cosin Palamon,' quod he,
'Thyn is the victorie of this aventure,
Ful blisfully in prison maistow dure;[4]
In prison? Certes nay, but in paradys!
Wel hath fortune y-turned thee the dys,[5]
That hast the sighte of hir, and I th'absence,
For possible is, sin thou hast hir presence,
And art a knight, a worthy and an able,
That by som cas, sin fortune is chaungeable,
Thou mayst to thy desyr som-tyme atteyne.
But I, that am exyled, and bareyne
Of alle grace, and in so greet despeir,
That ther nis erthe, water, fyr, ne eir,
Ne creature, that of hem maked is,
That may me helpe or doon confort in this:
Wel oughte I sterve in wanhope[6] and distresse;
Farwel my lyf, my lust, and my gladnesse!
Allas, why pleynen folk so in commune
Of purveyaunce of God, or of fortune,
That yeveth hem ful ofte in many a gyse
Wel bettre than they can hem-self devyse?
Som man desyreth for to han richesse,
That cause is of his mordre[7] or greet siknesse.
And som man wolde out of his prison fayn,
That in his hous is of his meynee[8] slayn.
Infinite harmes been in this matere;
We witen nat what thing we preyen here.
We faren as he that dronke is as a mous;
A dronke man wot wel he hath an hous,
But he noot which the righte wey is thider;
And to a dronke man the wey is slider.[9]
And certes, in this world so faren we;
We seken faste after felicitee,
But we goon wrong full often, trewely.
Thus may we seyen alle, and namely[10] I
That wende[11] and hadde a greet opinioun,
That, if I mighte escapen from prisoun,
Than hadde I been in joye and perfit hele,[12]
Ther now I am exyled fro my wele.
Sin that I may nat seen yow, Emelye,
I nam but deed; ther nis no remedye.'
Up-on that other syde Palamon,
Whan that he wiste Arcite was agon,
Swich sorwe he maketh, that the grete tour
Resouneth of his youling and clamour.
The pure[13] fettres on his shines grete
Weren of his bittre salte teres wete.
'Allas!' quod he, 'Arcita, cosin myn,
Of al our stryf, God woot, the fruyt is thyn.
Thow walkest now in Thebes at thy large,
And of my wo thou yevest litel charge.
Thou mayst, sin thou hast wisdom and manhede,
Assemblen alle the folk of our kinrede,
And make a werre so sharp on this citee,
That by some aventure, or some tretee,
Thou mayst have hir to lady and to wyf,
For whom that I mot nedes lese[14] my lyf.
For, as by wey of possibilitee,
Sith thou art at thy large, of prison free,
And art a lord, greet is thyn avauntage,
More than is myn, that sterve here in a cage.
For I mot wepe and wayle, whyl I live,
With al the wo that prison may me yive,
And eek with peyne that love me yiveth also,
That doubleth al my torment and my wo.'

[1] hour. [2] help. [3] in pledge. [4] mayest thou endure. [5] dice. [6] despair.
[7] murder. [8] servants. [9] slippery. [10] especially. [11] weened, thought. [12] health. [13] very. [14] must needs lose.

Ther-with the fyr of jelousye up-sterte
With-inne his brest, and hente him by the herte
So woodly,[1] that he lyk was to biholde
The box-tree, or the asshen dede and colde.
Tho seyde he; 'O cruel goddes, that governe
This world with binding of your word eterne,
And wryten in the table of athamaunt[2]
Your parlement,[3] and your eterne graunt,
What is mankinde more un-to yow holde
Than is the sheep, that rouketh[4] in the folde.
For slayn is man right as another beste,
And dwelleth eek in prison and areste,
And hath siknesse, and greet adversitee,
And ofte tymes giltelees, pardee!
What governaunce is in this prescience,
That giltelees tormenteth innocence?
And yet encreseth this al my penaunce,
That man is bounden to his observaunce,
For Goddes sake, to letten of his wille,
Ther as a beest may al his lust fulfille.
And whan a beest is deed, he hath no peyne;
But man after his deeth moot wepe and pleyne,
Though in this world he have care and wo:
With-outen doute it may stonden so.
Th' answere of this I lete to divynis,[5]
But wel I woot, that in this world gret pyne is.
Allas! I see a serpent or a theef,
That many a trewe man hath doon meschief,
Goon at his large, and wher him list may turne.
But I mot been in prison thurgh Saturne,
And eek thurgh Juno, jalous and eek wood,
That hath destroyed wel ny al the blood
Of Thebes, with his waste walles wyde.
And Venus sleeth me on that other syde
For jelousye, and fere of him Arcite.'
Now wol I stinte of Palamon a lyte,
And lete him in his prison stille dwelle,
And of Arcita forth I wol yow telle.
The somer passeth, and the nightes longe
Encresen double wyse the peynes stronge
Bothe of the lovere and the prisoner.
I noot which hath the wofullere mester.[6]
For shortly for to seyn, this Palamoun
Perpetuelly is dampned to prisoun,
In cheynes and in fettres to ben deed;
And Arcite is exyled upon his heed
For ever-mo as out of that contree,
Ne never-mo he shal his lady see.
Yow loveres axe I now this questioun,
Who hath the worse, Arcite or Palamoun?
That oon may seen his lady day by day,
But in prison he moot dwelle alway.
That other wher him list may ryde or go,
But seen his lady shal he never-mo.
Now demeth as yow liste, ye that can,
For I wol telle forth as I bigan.

Explicit prima Pars.
Sequitur pars secunda.

Whan that Arcite to Thebes comen was,
Ful ofte a day he swelte[7] and seyde 'allas,'
For seen his lady shal he never-mo.
And shortly to concluden al his wo,
So muche sorwe had never creature
That is, or shal, whyl that the world may dure.
His sleep, his mete, his drink is him biraft,
That lene he wex, and drye as is a shaft.
His eyen holwe, and grisly to biholde;
His hewe falwe, and pale as asshen colde,
And solitarie he was, and ever allone,
And waillling al the night, making his mone.
And if he herde song or instrument,
Then wolde he wepe, he mighte nat be stent;
So feeble eek were his spirits, and so lowe,
And chaunged so, that no man coude knowe
His speche nor his vois, though men it herde.
And in his gere,[8] for al the world he ferde
Nat oonly lyk the loveres maladye
Of Hereos,[9] but rather lyk manye[10]
Engendred of humour malencolyk,
Biforen, in his celle fantastyk.[11]
And shortly, turned was al up-so-doun
Bothe habit and eek disposicioun
Of him, this woful lovere daun[12] Arcite.
What sholde I al-day of his wo endyte?
Whan he endured hadde a yeer or two
This cruel torment, and this peyne and wo,
At Thebes, in his contree, as I seyde,
Up-on a night, in sleep as he him leyde,
Him thoughte how that the winged god Mercurie
Biforn him stood, and bad him to be murye.

[1] madly. [2] adamant. [3] decree. [4] huddles.
[5] divines. [6] the more woful occupation, life.
[7] swooned. [8] behavior.
[9] A specific disease of lovers and such. See *Modern Philology*, XI, 491. [10] mania.
[11] An allusion to the mediæval notion of humors and a triple division of the brain. Cf. *Macbeth*, I, 7, 65.
[12] sir, *dominus*.

His slepy yerde[1] in hond he bar uprighte;
An hat he werede up-on his heres brighte.
Arrayed was this god (as he took keepe[2]) 531
As he was whan that Argus took his sleep;
And seyde him thus: 'To Athenës shaltou wende;
Ther is thee shapen of thy wo an ende.'
And with that word Arcite wook and sterte.
'Now trewely, how sore that me smerte,'
Quod he, 'to Athenës right now wol I fare;
Ne for the drede of deeth shal I nat spare
To see my lady, that I love and serve;
In hir presence I recche nat to sterve.' 540
And with that word he caughte a greet mirour,
And saugh that chaunged was al his colour,
And saugh his visage al in another kinde.
And right anoon it ran him in his minde,
That, sith his face was so disfigured
Of maladye, the which he hadde endured,
He mighte wel, if that be bar him lowe,[3]
Live in Athenes ever-more unknowe,
And seen his lady wel ny day by day.
And right anon he chaunged his array, 550
And cladde him as a povre laborer,
And al allone, save oonly a squyer,
That knew his privetee and al his cas,
Which was disgysed povrely, as he was,
To Athenës is he goon the nexte[4] way.
And to the court he wente up-on a day,
And at the gate he profreth his servyse,
To drugge[5] and drawe, what so men wol devyse.
And shortly of this matere for to seyn,
He fil in office[6] with a chamberleyn, 560
The which that dwelling was with Emelye;
For he was wys, and coude soon aspye
Of every servaunt, which that serveth here.
Wel coude he hewen wode, and water bere,
For he was yong and mighty for the nones,
And ther-to he was strong and big of bones
To doon that any wight can him devyse.
A yeer or two he was in this servyse,
Page of the chambre of Emelye the brighte;
And 'Philostrate' he seide that he highte.
But half so wel biloved a man as he 571
Ne was ther never in court, of his degree;
He was so gentil of condicioun,
That thurghout al the court was his renoun.
They seyden, that it were a charitee
That Theseus wolde enhauncen his degree,
And putten him in worshipful servyse,
Ther as he mighte his vertu excercyse.
And thus, with-inne a whyle, his name is spronge 579
Bothe of his dedes, and his goode tonge,
That Theseus hath taken him so neer
That of his chambre he made him a squyer,
And yaf him gold to mayntene his degree;
And eek men broghte him out of his contree
From yeer to yeer, ful prively, his rente;
But honestly and slyly he it spente,
That no man wondred how that he it hadde.
And three yeer in this wyse his lyf he ladde,
And bar him so in pees and eek in werre,
Ther nas no man that Theseus hath derre.[7]
And in this blisse lete I now Arcite, 591
And speke I wol of Palamon a lyte.
In derknesse and horrible and strong prisoun
This seven yeer hath seten Palamoun,
Forpyned,[8] what for wo and for distresse;
Who feleth double soor[9] and hevinesse
But Palamon? that love destreyneth[10] so,
That wood out of his wit he gooth for wo;
And eek therto he is a prisoner
Perpetuelly, noght oonly for a yeer. 600
Who coude ryme in English proprely
His martirdom? For sothe, it am nat I;
Therefore I passe as lightly as I may.
It fel that in the seventhe yeer, in May,
The thridde night, (as olde bokes seyn
That al this storie tellen more pleyn,)
Were it by aventure or destinee,
(As, whan a thing is shapen, it shal be,)
That, sone after the midnight, Palamoun,
By helping of a freend, brak his prisoun, 610
And fleeth the citee, faste as he may go;
For he had yive his gayler drinke so
Of a claree,[11] maad of a certeyn wyn,
With nercotikes and opie[12] of Thebes fyn,
That al that night, thogh that men wolde him shake,
The gayler sleep, he mighte nat awake;
And thus he fleeth as faste as ever he may.
The night was short, and faste by the day,
That nedes-cost[13] he moste him-selven hyde,
And til a grove, faste ther besyde, 620
With dredful foot than stalketh Palamoun.
For shortly, this was his opinioun.
That in that grove he wolde him hyde al day,
And in the night than wolde he take his way

[1] sleep-causing rod. [2] heed. [3] lived in obscurity. [4] shortest. [5] drudge. [6] took service. [7] dearer. [8] Greatly tormented. [9] sorrow. [10] persecutes. [11] spiced wine. [12] opium. [13] necessarily.

To Thebes-ward, his freendes for to preye
On Theseus to helpe him to werreye; [1]
And shortly, outher he wolde lese his lyf,
Or winnen Emelye un-to his wyf;
This is th'effect and his entente pleyn.
Now wol I torne un-to Arcite ageyn,
That litel wiste how ny that was his care,
Til that fortune had broght him in the snare.

The bisy larke, messager of day,
Saluëth in hir song the morwe gray;
And fyry Phebus ryseth up so brighte,
That al the orient laugheth of the lighte,
And with his stremes dryeth in the greves
The silver dropes, hanging on the leves.
And Arcite, that is in the court royal
With Theseus, his squyer principal,
Is risen, and loketh on the myrie day.
And, for to doon his observaunce to May,
Remembring on the poynt of his desyr,
He on a courser, startlynge [2] as the fyr,
Is riden in-to the feeldes, him to pleye,
Out of the court, were it a myle or tweye;
And to the grove, of which that I yow tolde,
By aventure, his wey he gan to holde,
To maken him a gerland of the greves,
Were it of wodebinde or hawethorn-leves,
And loude he song ageyn the sonne shene:
'May, with alle thy floures and thy grene,
Wel-come be thou, faire fresshe May,
I hope that I som grene gete may.'
And from his courser, with a lusty herte,
In-to the grove ful hastily he sterte,
And in a path he rometh up and doun,
Ther-as, by aventure, this Palamoun
Was in a bush, that no man mighte him see,
For sore afered of his deeth was he.
No-thing ne knew he that it was Arcite:
God wot he wolde have trowed it ful lyte.
But sooth is seyd, gon sithen many yeres,
That 'feeld hath eyen, and the wode hath eres.'
It is ful fair a man to bere him evene, [3]
For al-day meteth men at unset stevene. [4]
Ful litel woot Arcite of his felawe,
That was so ny to herknen al his sawe,
For in the bush he sitteth now ful stille.
Whan that Arcite had romed al his fille,
And songen al the roundel lustily,
In-to a studie he fil sodeynly,
As doon thise lovers in hir queynte geres, [5]
Now in the croppe, [6] now doun in the breres,
Now up, now doun, as boket in a welle.
Right as the Friday, soothly for to telle,
Now it shyneth, now it reyneth faste,
Right so can gery [7] Venus overcaste
The hertes of hir folk; right as hir day [8]
Is gerful, [7] right so chaungeth she array.
Selde is the Friday al the wyke y-lyke.
Whan that Arcite had songe, he gan to syke, [9]
And sette him doun with-outen any more:
'Alas!' quod he, 'that day that I was bore!
How longe, Juno, thurgh thy crueltee,
Woltow werreyen Thebes the citee?
Allas! y-broght is to confusioun
The blood royal of Cadme and Amphioun;
Of Cadmus, which that was the firste man
That Thebes bulte, or first the toun bigan,
And of the citee first was crouned king,
Of his linage am I, and his of spring
By verray ligne, as of the stok royal:
And now I am so caitif and so thral,
That he, that is my mortal enemy,
I serve him as his squyer povrely.
And yet doth Juno me wel more shame,
For I dar noght biknowe myn owne name;
But ther-as I was wont to highte Arcite,
Now highte I Philostrate, noght worth a myte.
Allas! thou felle Mars, allas! Juno,
Thus hath your ire our kinrede al fordo,
Save only me, and wrecched Palamoun,
That Theseus martyreth in prisoun.
And over al this, to sleen me utterly,
Love hath his fyry dart so brenningly
Y-stiked thurgh my trewe careful herte,
That shapen was my deeth erst [10] than my sherte.
Ye sleen me with your eyen, Emelye;
Ye been the cause wherfor that I dye.
Of al the remenant of myn other care
Ne sette I nat the mountaunce [11] of a tare
So that I coude don aught to your plesaunce!'
And with that word he fil doun in a traunce
A longe tyme; and after he up-sterte.
This Palamoun, that thoughte that thurgh his herte
He felte a cold swerd sodeynliche glyde,
For ire he quook, [12] no lenger wolde he byde.
And whan that he had herd Arcites tale,
As he were wood, with face deed and pale,

1 make war. 2 skittish. Another reading is *stertyng*.
3 be circumspect, steadfast. 4 unexpectedly.
5 changeful ways, turns. 6 top.
7 changeable. 8 i.e. Friday. 9 sigh. 10 ere, i.e. his death was foreordained. 11 amount. 12 quaked.

He sterte him up out of the buskes thikke,
And seyde: 'Arcite, false traitour wikke,[1]
Now artow hent,[2] that lovest my lady so,
For whom that I have al this peyne and wo,
And art my blood, and to my counseil sworn,
As I ful ofte have told thee heer-biforn,
And hast by-japed[3] here duk Theseus,
And falsly chaunged hast thy name thus;
I wol be deed, or elles thou shalt dye.
Thou shalt nat love my lady Emelye,
But I wol love hir only, and namo;
For I am Palamoun, thy mortal fo.
And though that I no wepne have in this place,
But out of prison am astert by grace,
I drede noght that outher thou shalt dye,
Or thou ne shalt nat loven Emelye.
Chees which thou wilt, for thou shalt nat asterte.'
This Arcitë, with ful despitous herte,
Whan he him knew, and hadde his tale herd,
As fiers as leoun, pulled out a swerd,
And seyde thus: 'By God that sit above,
Nere[4] it that thou art sik, and wood for love,
And eek that thou no wepne hast in this place,
Thou sholdest never out of this grove pace,
That thou ne sholdest dyen of myn hond.
For I defye the seurtee and the bond
Which that thou seyst that I have maad to thee.
What, verray fool, think wel that love is free,
And I wol love hir, maugre al thy might!
But, for as muche thou art a worthy knight,
And wilnest to darreyne[5] hir by batayle,
Have heer my trouthe, to-morwe I wol nat fayle,
With-outen witing of any other wight,
That here I wol be founden as a knight,
And bringen harneys right y-nough for thee;
And chees the beste, and leve the worste for me.
And mete and drinke this night wol I bringe
Y-nough for thee, and clothes for thy beddinge.
And, if so be that thou my lady winne,
And slee me in this wode ther I am inne,
Thou mayst wel have thy lady, as for me.'
This Palamon answerde: 'I graunte it thee.'
And thus they been departed til a-morwe,
When ech of hem had leyd his feith to borwe.[6]
O Cupide, out of alle charitee!
O regne,[7] that wolt no felawe have with thee!
Ful sooth is seyd, that love ne lordshipe
Wol noght, his thankes,[8] have no felaweshipe;
Wel finden that Arcite and Palamoun.
Arcite is riden anon un-to the toun,
And on the morwe, er it were dayes light,
Ful prively two harneys hath he dight,
Bothe suffisaunt and mete to darreyne
The bataille in the feeld bitwix hem tweyne.
And on his hors, allone as he was born,
He carieth al this harneys him biforn;
And in the grove, at tyme and place y-set,
This Arcite and this Palamon ben met.
Tho chaungen gan the colour in hir face;
Right as the hunter in the regne of Trace,
That stondeth at the gappe with a spere,
Whan hunted is the leoun or the bere,
And hereth him come russhing in the greves,
And breketh bothe bowes and the leves,
And thinketh, 'Heer cometh my mortel enemy,
With-oute faile, he moot be deed, or I;
For outher I mot sleen him at the gappe,
Or he mot sleen me, if that me mishappe:'
So ferden they, in chaunging of hir hewe,
As fer as everich of hem other knewe.
Ther nas no good day, ne no saluing;[9]
But streight, with-outen word or rehersing,
Everich of hem halp[10] for to armen other,
As freendly as he were his owne brother;
And after that, with sharpe speres stronge
They foynen[11] ech at other wonder longe.
Thou mightest wene that this Palamoun
In his fighting were a wood leoun,
And as a cruel tygre was Arcite:
As wilde bores gonne they to smyte,
That frothen whyte as foom for ire wood.
Up to the ancle foghte they in hir blood.
And in this wyse I lete hem fighting dwelle;
And forth I wol of Theseus yow telle.
The destinee, ministre general,
That executeth in the world over-al

[1] wicked. [2] caught. [3] fooled.
[4] Were it not. [5] decide the right to.
[6] pledged his faith. [7] rule. [8] willingly.
[9] saluting. [10] helped. [11] thrust.

The purveyaunce, that God hath seyn biforn,
So strong it is, that, though the world had sworn
The contrarie of a thing, by ye or nay,
Yet somtyme it shal fallen on a day
That falleth nat eft with-inne a thousand yere.
For certeinly, our appetytes here,
Be it of werre, or pees, or hate, or love,
Al is this reuled by the sighte above.
This mene I now by mighty Theseus,
That for to honten is so desirous,
And namely at the grete hert in May,
That in his bed ther daweth him no day,
That he nis clad, and redy for to ryde
With hunte[1] and horn, and houndes him bisyde.
For in his hunting hath he swich delyt,
That it is al his joye and appetyt
To been him-self the grete hertes bane:
For after Mars he serveth now Diane.
Cleer was the day, as I have told er this,
And Theseus, with alle joye and blis,
With his Ipolita, the fayre quene,
And Emelye, clothed al in grene,
On hunting be they riden royally.
And to the grove, that stood ful faste by,
In which ther was an hert, as men him tolde,
Duk Theseus the streighte wey hath holde.
And to the launde[2] he rydeth him ful right,
For thider was the hert wont have his flight,
And over a brook, and so forth on his weye.
This duk wol han a cours at him, or tweye,
With houndes, swiche as that him list comaunde.
And whan this duk was come un-to the launde,
Under the sonne he loketh, and anon
He was war of Arcite and Palamon,
That foughten breme,[3] as it were bores two;
The brighte swerdes wenten to and fro
So hidously, that with the leeste strook
It seemed as it wolde felle an ook;
But what they were, no-thing he ne woot.
This duk his courser with his spores smoot,
And at a stert he was bitwix hem two,
And pulled out a swerd and cryed, 'Ho!
Namore, up[4] peyne of lesing of your heed.
By mighty Mars, he shal anon be deed
That smyteth any strook that I may seen!
But telleth me what mister[5] men ye been,
That been so hardy for to fighten here
With-outen juge or other officere,
As it were in a listes royally?'
This Palamon answerede hastily
And seyde: 'Sire, what nedeth wordes mo?
We have the deeth deserved bothe two.
Two woful wrecches been we, two caytyves,
That been encombred of our owne lyves;
And as thou art a rightful lord and juge,
Ne yeve us neither mercy ne refuge;
But slee me first, for seynte charitee;
But slee my felawe eek as wel as me.
Or slee him first; for, though thou knowe it lyte,
This is thy mortal fo, this is Arcite,
That fro thy lond is banished on his heed,
For which he hath deserved to be deed.
For this is he that cam un-to thy gate,
And seyde, that he highte Philostrate.
Thus hath he japed[6] thee full many a yeer,
And thou has maked him thy chief squyer:
And this is he that loveth Emelye.
For sith the day is come that I shal dye,
I make pleynly my confessioun,
That I am thilke woful Palamoun,
That hath thy prison broken wikkedly.
I am thy mortal fo, and it am I
That loveth so hote Emelye the brighte,
That I wol dye present in his sighte.
Therfore I axe deeth and my juwyse;[7]
But slee my felawe in the same wyse,
For bothe han we deserved to be slayn.'
This worthy duk answerde anon agayn,
And seyde, 'This is a short conclusioun:
Youre owne mouth, by your confessioun,
Hath dampned you, and I wol it recorde,
It nedeth noght to pyne[8] yow with the corde.
Ye shul be deed, by mighty Mars the rede!'
The quene anon, for verray wommanhede,
Gan for to wepe, and so dide Emelye,
And alle the ladies in the companye.
Gret pitee was it, as it thoughte hem alle,
That ever swich a chaunce sholde falle;
For gentil men they were, of greet estat,
And no-thing but for love was this debat;
And sawe hir blody woundes wyde and sore;
And alle cryden, bothe lasse and more,
'Have mercy, lord, up-on us wommen alle!'
And on hir bare knees adoun they falle,

[1] huntsman. [2] glade. [3] furiously. [4] upon. [5] manner of. [6] deceived. [7] judgment. [8] torture.

And wolde have kist his feet ther-as he stood,
Til at the laste aslaked was his mood;
For pitee renneth sone in gentil herte.
And though he first for ire quook and sterte,
He hath considered shortly, in a clause,
The trespas of hem bothe, and eek the cause:
And al-though that his ire hir gilt accused,
Yet in his reson he hem bothe excused;
As thus: he thoghte wel, that every man
Wol helpe him-self in love, if that he can,
And eek delivere him-self out of prisoun;
And eek his herte had compassioun
Of wommen, for they wepen ever in oon;
And in his gentil herte he thoghte anoon,
And softe un-to himself he seyde: 'Fy
Up-on a lord that wol have no mercy,
But been a leoun, bothe in word and dede,
To hem that been in repentaunce and drede
As wel as to a proud despitous man
That wol maynteyne that he first bigan!
That lord hath litel of discrecioun,
That in swich cas can no divisioun,
But weyeth pryde and humblesse after oon.'[1]
And shortly, whan his ire is thus agoon,
He gan to loken up with eyen lighte,
And spak thise same wordes al on highte: —
'The god of love, a! *benedicite*,
How mighty and how greet a lord is he!
Ayeins his might ther gayneth none obstacles,
He may be cleped a god for his miracles;
For he can maken at his owne gyse
Of everich herte, as that him list devyse.
Lo heer, this Arcite and this Palamoun,
That quitly[2] weren out of my prisoun,
And mighte han lived in Thebes royally,
And witen I am hir mortal enemy,
And that hir deeth lyth in my might also;
And yet hath love, maugree hir eyen two,
Y-broght hem hider bothe for to dye!
Now loketh, is nat that an heigh folye?
Who may been a fool, but-if he love?
Bihold, for Goddes sake that sit above,
Se how they blede! be they noght wel arrayed?
Thus hath hir lord, the god of love, y-payed
Hir wages and hir fees for hir servyse!
And yet they wenen for to been ful wyse
That serven love, for aught that may bifalle!
But this is yet the beste game of alle,
That she, for whom they han this jolitee,
Can hem ther-for as muche thank as me;
She woot namore of al this hote fare,
By God, than woot a cokkow or an hare!
But al mot been assayed, hoot and cold;
A man mot been a fool, or yong or old;
I woot it by my-self ful yore agoon:
For in my tyme a servant[3] was I oon.
And therfore, sin[4] I knowe of loves peyne,
And woot how sore it can a man distreyne,
As he that hath ben caught ofte in his las,[5]
I yow foryeve al hoolly this trespas,
At requeste of the quene that kneleth here,
And eek of Emelye, my suster dere.
And ye shul bothe anon un-to me swere,
That never-mo ye shul my contree dere,[6]
Ne make werre up-on me night ne day,
But been my freendes in al that ye may;
I yow foryeve this trespas every del.'
And they him swore his axing fayre and wel,
And him of lordshipe and of mercy preyde,
And he hem graunteth grace, and thus he seyde:
'To speke of royal linage and richesse,
Though that she were a quene or a princesse,
Ech of yow bothe is worthy, doutelees,
To wedden whan tyme is, but nathelees
I speke as for my suster Emelye,
For whom ye have this stryf and jelousye;
Ye woot your-self, she may not wedden two
At ones, though ye fighten ever-mo:
That oon of yow, al be him looth or leef,
He moot go pypen in an ivy-leef;
This is to seyn, she may nat now han bothe,
Al be ye never so jelous, ne so wrothe.
And for-thy I yow putte in this degree,
That ech of yow shal have his destinee
As him is shape; and herkneth in what wyse;
Lo, heer your ende of that I shal devyse.
My wil is this, for plat[7] conclusioun,
With-outen any replicacioun,
If that yow lyketh, tak it for the beste,
That everich of yow shal gon wher him leste
Frely, with-outen raunson or daunger;
And this day fifty wykes, fer ne ner,[8]

[1] Regards them equally. [2] entirely. [3] i.e. of love. [4] since. [5] lace, net. [6] injure. [7] certain. [8] further nor nearer, more nor less, i.e. exactly.

Everich of yow shal bringe an hundred knightes,
Armed for listes up at alle rightes,
Al redy to darreyne hir by bataille.
And this bihote I yow, with-outen faille,
Up-on my trouthe, and as I am a knight,
That whether[1] of yow bothe that hath might,
This is to seyn, that whether he or thou
May with his hundred, as I spak of now,
Sleen his contrarie, or out of listes dryve,
Him shal I yeve Emelya to wyve,
To whom that fortune yeveth so fair a grace.
The listes shal I maken in this place,
And God so wisly on my soule rewe,
As I shal even juge been and trewe.
Ye shul non other ende with me maken,
That oon of yow ne shal be deed or taken.
And if yow thinketh this is wel y-sayd,
Seyeth your avys, and holdeth yow apayd.[2]
This is your ende and your conclusioun.'

Who loketh lightly now but Palamoun?
Who springeth up for joye but Arcite?
Who couthe telle, or who couthe it endyte,
The joye that is maked in the place
Whan Theseus hath doon so fair a grace?
But doun on knees wente every maner wight,
And thanked him with al her herte and might,
And namely the Thebans ofte sythe.[3]
And thus with good hope and with herte blythe
They take hir leve, and hom-ward gonne they ryde
To Thebes, with his olde walles wyde.

Explicit secunda pars.
Sequitur pars tercia.

I trowe men wolde deme it necligence,
If I foryete to tellen the dispence
Of Theseus, that goth so busily
To maken up the listes royally;
That swich a noble theatre as it was,
I dar wel seyn that in this world ther nas.
The circuit a myle was aboute,
Walled of stoon, and diched al with-oute.
Round was the shap, in maner of compas,
Ful of degrees,[4] the heighte of sixty pas,
That, whan a man was set on o degree,
He letted[5] nat his felawe for to see.

Est-ward ther stood a gate of marbel whyt,
West-ward, right swich another in the oposit.
And shortly to concluden, swich a place
Was noon in erthe, as in so litel space;
For in the lond ther nas no crafty man,
That geometrie or ars-metrik[6] can,
Ne purtreyour, ne kerver of images,
That Theseus ne yaf him mete and wages
The theatre for to maken and devyse.
And for to doon his ryte and sacrifyse,
He est-ward hath, up-on the gate above,
In worship of Venus, goddesse of love,
Don make[7] an auter and an oratorie;
And west-ward, in the minde and in memorie
Of Mars, he maked hath right swich another,
That coste largely of gold a fother.[8]
And north-ward, in a touret[9] on the wal,
Of alabastre whyt and reed coral
An oratorie riche for to see,
In worship of Dyane of chastitee,
Hath Theseus don wroght in noble wyse.

But yet hadde I foryeten[10] to devyse
The noble kerving, and the portreitures,
The shap, the countenaunce, and the figures,
That weren in thise oratories three.

First in the temple of Venus maystow sse
Wroght on the wal, ful pitous to biholde,
The broken slepes, and the sykes colde;[11]
The sacred teres, and the waymenting;[12]
The fyry strokes of the desiring
That loves servaunts in this lyf enduren;
The othes, that hir covenants assuren;
Plesaunce and Hope, Desyr, Fool-hardinesse,
Beautee and Youthe, Bauderie,[13] Richesse,
Charmes and Force, Lesinges,[14] Flaterye,
Dispense, Bisynesse, and Jelousye,
That wered of yelwe goldes[15] a gerland,
And a cokkow sitting on hir hand;
Festes, instruments, caroles, daunces,
Lust and Array, and alle the circumstaunces
Of love, whiche that I rekne and rekne shal,
By ordre weren peynted on the wal,
And mo[16] than I can make of mencioun.
For soothly, al the mount of Citheroun,
Ther Venus hath hir principal dwelling,
Was shewed on the wal in portreying,

1 which of the two. 2 satisfied.
3 times. 4 steps. 5 hindered.
6 arithmetic. 7 caused to be made. 8 load.
9 turret. 10 Subjunctive, "I nearly forgot."
11 cruel sighs. 12 lamentation. 13 lechery.
14 lyings. 15 marigolds. 16 more.

With al the gardin, and the lustinesse.
Nat was foryeten the porter Ydelnesse,
Ne Narcisus the faire of yore agon,
Ne yet the folye of king Salamon,
Ne yet the grete strengthe of Hercules —
Th'enchauntements of Medea and Circes —
Ne of Turnus, with the hardy fiers corage,
The riche Cresus, caytif in servage.
Thus may ye seen that wisdom ne richesse,
Beautee ne sleighte, strengthe, ne hardinesse,
Ne may with Venus holde champartye;[1]
For as hir list the world than may she gye.
Lo, alle thise folk so caught were in hir las,
Til they for wo ful ofte seyde 'allas!'
Suffyceth heer ensamples oon or two,
And though I coude rekne a thousand mo.
The statue of Venus, glorious for to see,
Was naked fleting in the large see,
And fro the navele doun all covered was
With wawes[2] grene, and brighte as any glas.
A citole[3] in hir right hand hadde she,
And on hir heed, ful semely for to see,
A rose gerland, fresh and wel smellinge;
Above hir heed hir dowves flikeringe.
Biforn hir stood hir sone Cupido,
Up-on his shuldres winges hadde he two;
And blind he was, as it is ofte sene;
A bowe he bar and arwes brighte and kene.
Why sholde I noght as wel eek telle yow al
The portreiture, that was up-on the wal
With-inne the temple of mighty Mars the rede?
Al peynted was the wal, in lengthe and brede,
Lyk to the estres[4] of the grisly place
That highte the grete temple of Mars in Trace,
In thilke colde frosty regioun,
Ther-as Mars hath his sovereyn mansioun.
First on the wal was peynted a foreste,
In which ther dwelleth neither man ne beste,
With knotty knarry[5] bareyn treës olde
Of stubbes sharpe and hidous to biholde;
In which ther ran a rumbel and a swough,[6]
As though a storm sholde bresten[7] every bough:

[1] equality, rivalry. [2] waves. [3] a sort of harp. [4] interior. [5] gnarled. [6] soughing, murmur. [7] break.

And downward from an hille, under a bente,[8]
Ther stood the temple of Mars armipotente,
Wroght al of burned steel, of which thentree
Was long and streit, and gastly for to see.
And ther-out cam a rage and such a vese,[9]
That it made al the gates for to rese.[10]
The northren light in at the dores shoon,
For windowe on the wal ne was ther noon,
Thurgh which men mighten any light discerne.
The dores were alle of adamant eterne,
Y-clenched overthwart and endelong[11]
With iren tough; and, for to make it strong,
Every piler, the temple to sustene,
Was tonne-greet,[12] of iren bright and shene.
Ther saugh I first the derke imagining
Of felonye, and al the compassing;
The cruel Ire, reed as any glede;[13]
The pykepurs, and eek the pale Drede;
The smyler with the knyf under the cloke;
The shepne[14] brenning with the blake smoke;
The treson of the mordring in the bedde;
The open werre, with woundes al bibledde;
Contek,[15] with blody knyf and sharp manace;
Al ful of chirking[16] was that sory place.
The sleere of him-self yet saugh I ther,
His herte-blood hath bathed al his heer;
The nayl y-driven in the shode[17] a-night;
The colde deeth, with mouth gaping upright.
Amiddes of the temple sat Meschaunce,
With disconfort and sory contenaunce.
Yet saugh I Woodnesse[18] laughing in his rage;
Armed Compleint, Out-hees,[19] and fiers Outrage.
The careyne[20] in the bush, with throte y-corve:[21]
A thousand slayn, and nat of qualm[22] y-storve;[23]
The tiraunt, with the prey by force y-raft;
The toun destroyed, ther was no-thing laft.
Yet saugh I brent the shippes hoppesteres;[24]
The hunte[25] strangled with[26] the wilde beres;
The sowe freten[27] the child right in the cradel;
The cook y-scalded, for al his longe ladel.

[8] grassy slope. [9] gust. [10] shake. [11] crosswise and longwise. [12] thick as a barrel. [13] hot coal. [14] barn. [15] Strife. [16] creaking. [17] parting of the hair. [18] Madness. [19] Alarm. [20] carrion. [21] cut. [22] plague. [23] dead. [24] dancing. [25] hunter. [26] by. [27] devour.

Noght was foryeten by the infortune of Marte;
The carter over-riden with his carte,
Under the wheel ful lowe he lay adoun.
Ther were also, of Martes divisioun,[1]
The barbour, and the bocher, and the smith
That forgeth sharpe swerdes on his stith.[2]
And al above, depeynted in a tour,
Saw I Conquest sittinge in greet honour,
With the sharpe swerde over his heed
Hanginge by a sotil twynes threed.
Depeynted was the slaughtre of Julius,
Of grete Nero, and of Antonius;
Al be that thilke tyme they were unborn,
Yet was hir deeth depeynted ther-biforn,
By manasinge of Mars, right by figure;
So was it shewed in that portreiture
As is depeynted in the sterres above,
Who shal be slayn or elles deed for love.
Suffyceth oon ensample in stories olde,
I may not rekne hem alle, thogh I wolde.
The statue of Mars up-on a carte[3] stood,
Armed, and loked grim as he were wood;
And over his heed ther shynen two figures
Of sterres, that been cleped[4] in scriptures
That oon Puella, that other Rubeus.
This god of armes was arrayed thus:—
A wolf ther stood biforn him at his feet
With eyen rede, and of a man he eet;
With sotil pencel was depeynt this storie,
In redoutinge[5] of Mars and of his glorie.
Now to the temple of Diane the chaste
As shortly as I can I wol me haste,
To telle yow al the descripcioun.
Depeynted been the walles up and doun
Of hunting and of shamfast chastitee.
Ther saugh I how woful Calistopee,[6]
Whan that Diane agreved was with here,
Was turned from a womman til a bere,
And after was she maad the lode-sterre;
Thus was it peynt, I can say yow no ferre;[7]
Hir sone is eek a sterre, as men may see.
Ther saugh I Dane,[8] y-turned til a tree,
I mene nat the goddesse Diane,
But Penneus doughter, which that highte Dane.
Ther saugh I Attheon an hert y-maked,
For vengeaunce that he saugh Diane al naked;
I saugh how that his houndes have him caught,
And freten him, for that they knewe him naught.

[1] under the influence of Mars. [2] anvil. [3] chariot. [4] termed. The reference here is to figures in geomancy. See Skeat's note. [5] honouring. [6] Callisto. [7] further. [8] Daphne.

Yet peynted was a litel forther-moor,[9]
How Atthalante hunted the wilde boor,
And Meleagre, and many another mo,
For which Diane wroghte him care and wo.
Ther saugh I many another wonder storie,
The whiche me list nat drawen to memorie.
This goddesse on an hert ful hye seet,
With smale houndes al aboute hir feet;
And undernethe hir feet she hadde a mone,
Wexing it was, and sholde wanie sone.
In gaude[10] grene hir statue clothed was,
With bowe in honde, and arwes in a cas.
Hir eyen caste she ful lowe adoun,
Ther Pluto hath his derke regioun.
A womman travailinge was hir biforn,
But, for hir child so longe was unborn,
Ful pitously Lucyna gan she calle,
And seyde, 'Help, for thou mayst best of alle.'
Wel couthe he peynten lyfly that it wroghte,
With many a florin he the hewes boghte.
Now been thise listes maad, and Theseus,
That at his grete cost arrayed thus
The temples and the theatre every del,
Whan it was doon, him lyked wonder wel.[11]
But stinte I wol of Theseus a lyte,
And speke of Palamon and of Arcite.
The day approcheth of hir retourninge,
That everich sholde an hundred knightes bringe,
The bataille to darreyne, as I yow tolde;
And til Athenes, hir covenant for to holde,
Hath everich of hem broght an hundred knightes
Wel armed for the werre at alle rightes.
And sikerly, ther trowed many a man
That never, sithen that the world bigan,
As for to speke of knighthod of hir hond,
As fer as God hath maked see or lond,
Nas, of so fewe, so noble a companye.
For every wight that lovede chivalrye,
And wolde, his thankes,[12] han a passant[13] name,
Hath preyed that he mighte ben of that game;
And wel was him, that ther-to chosen was.
For if ther fille to-morwe swich a cas,
Ye knowen wel, that every lusty knight,
That loveth paramours,[14] and hath his might,
Were it in Engelond, or elles-where,
They wolde, hir thankes, wilnen to be there,

[9] further on. [10] dyed with weld. [11] he was wondrous well pleased. [12] of his own free will. [13] surpassing. [14] as a right lover.

To fighte for a lady — benedicite!
It were a lusty sighte for to see.
And right so ferden they with Palamon.
With him ther wenten knightes many oon;
Som wol ben armed in an habergeoun,[1]
In a brest-plat and in a light gipoun;[2]
And somme woln have a peyre plates[3] large;
And somme woln have a Pruce[4] sheld, or a targe;
Somme woln ben armed on hir legges weel,
And have an ax, and somme a mace of steel.
Ther nis no newe gyse that it nas old.
Armed were they, as I have you told,
Everich after his opinioun.
Ther maistow seen coming with Palamoun
Ligurge him-self, the grete king of Trace;
Blak was his berd, and manly was his face.
The cercles of his eyen in his heed,
They gloweden bitwixe yelow and reed:
And lyk a griffon loked he aboute,
With kempe[5] heres on his browes stoute;
His limes grete, his braunes harde and stronge,
His shuldres brode, his armes rounde and longe.
And as the gyse was in his contree,
Ful hye up-on a char[6] of gold stood he,
With foure whyte boles[7] in the trays.
In-stede of cote-armure over his harnays,
With nayles yelwe and brighte as any gold,
He hadde a beres skin, col-blak, for-old,[8]
His longe heer was kembd[9] bihinde his bak,
As any ravenes fether it shoon for-blak:[10]
A wrethe of gold arm-greet, of huge wighte,
Upon his heed, set ful of stones brighte,
Of fyne rubies and of dyamaunts.
Aboute his char ther wenten whyte alaunts,[11]
Twenty and mo, as grete as any steer,
To hunten at the leoun or the deer,
And folwed him, with mosel[12] faste y-bounde,
Colers[13] of gold, and torets[14] fyled rounde.
An hundred lordes hadde he in his route
Armed ful wel, with hertes sterne and stoute.
With Arcita, in stories as men finde,
The grete Emetreus, the king of Inde,
Up-on a stede bay, trapped in steel,
Covered in cloth of gold diapred[15] weel,
Cam ryding lyk the god of armes, Mars.
His cote-armure[16] was of cloth of Tars,[17]
Couched[18] with perles whyte and rounde and grete.
His sadel was of brend[19] gold newe y-bete;[20]
A mantelet upon his shuldre hanginge
Bret-ful[21] of rubies rede, as fyr sparklinge.
His crispe[22] heer lyk ringes was y-ronne,
And that was yelow, and glitered as the sonne.
His nose was heigh, his eyen bright citryn,[23]
His lippes rounde, his colour was sangwyn,
A fewe fraknes[24] in his face y-spreynd,[25]
Betwixen yelow and somdel blak y-meynd,[26]
And as a leoun he his loking caste.
Of fyve and twenty yeer his age I caste.
His berd was wel bigonne for to springe;
His voys was as a trompe thunderinge.
Up-on his heed he wered of laurer grene
A gerland fresh and lusty for to sene.
Up-on his hand he bar, for his deduyt,[27]
An egle tame, as eny lilie whyt.
An hundred lordes hadde he with him there,
Al armed, sauf hir heddes, in al hir gere,
Ful richely in alle maner thinges.
For trusteth wel, that dukes, erles, kinges,
Were gadered in this noble companye,
For love and for encrees of chivalrye.
Aboute this king ther ran on every part
Ful many a tame leoun and lepart.
And in this wyse thise lordes, alle and some,
Ben on the Sonday to the citee come
Aboute pryme,[28] and in the toun alight.
This Theseus, this duk, this worthy knight,
Whan he had broght hem in-to his citee,
And inned[29] hem, everich in his degree,
He festeth hem, and dooth so greet labour
To esen hem, and doon hem al honour,
That yet men weneth that no mannes wit
Of noon estat ne coude amenden it.
The minstralcye, the service at the feste,
The grete yiftes to the moste and leste,
The riche array of Theseus paleys,
Ne who sat first ne last up-on the deys,[30]

[1] hauberk, coat of mail. [2] tunic or surcoat. [3] for breast and back. [4] Prussian. [5] shaggy. [6] chariot. [7] bulls. [8] very old. [9] combed; cf. *un*-kempt. [10] very black. [11] wolf-hounds. [12] muzzle. [13] collars. [14] swivel-rings. [15] diapered, patterned. [16] over-tunic bearing the coat-of-arms. [17] oriental silk. [18] adorned. [19] burnished. [20] embossed, wrought. [21] brim-full, thick set. [22] curly. [23] green-yellow. [24] freckles. [25] scattered. [26] mingled. [27] disport. [28] the early part of the morning. [29] lodged. [30] dais.

What ladies fairest been or best daunsinge,
Or which of hem can dauncen best and singe,
Ne who most felingly speketh of love:
What haukes sitten on the perche above,
What houndes liggen on the floor adoun:
Of al this make I now no mencioun;
But al th'effect,[1] that thinketh me the beste;
Now comth the poynt, and herkneth if yow leste.
The Sonday night, er day bigan to springe,
When Palamon the larke herde singe,
Although it nere nat day by houres two,
Yet song the larke, and Palamon also.
With holy herte, and with an heigh corage
He roos, to wenden on his pilgrimage
Un-to the blisful Citherea benigne,
I mene Venus, honurable and digne.[2]
And in hir houre[3] he walketh forth a pas
Un-to the listes, ther hir temple was,
And doun he kneleth, and with humble chere
And herte soor, he seyde as ye shul here.
'Faireste of faire, o lady myn, Venus,
Doughter to Jove and spouse of Vulcanus,
Thou glader of the mount of Citheroun,
For thilke love thou haddest to Adoun,[4]
Have pitee of my bittre teres smerte,
And tak myn humble preyer at thyn herte.
Alias! I ne have no langage to telle
Th'effectes ne the torments of myn helle;
Myn herte may myne harmes nat biwreye;[5]
I am so confus, that I can noght seye.
But mercy, lady bright, that knowest weel
My thought, and seest what harmes that I feel,
Considere al this, and rewe up-on my sore,
As wisly[6] as I shal for evermore,
Emforth[7] my might, thy trewe servant be,
And holden werre alwey with chastitee;
That make I myn avow, so ye me helpe.
I kepe noght of armes for to yelpe,[8]
Ne I ne axe nat to-morwe to have victorie,
Ne renoun in this cas, ne veyne glorie
Of pris[9] of armes blowen up and doun,
But I wolde have fully possessioun
Of Emelye, and dye in thy servyse;
Find thou the maner how, and in what wyse.
I recche nat, but it may bettre be,
To have victorie of hem, or they of me,
So that I have my lady in myne armes.
For though so be that Mars is god of armes,
Your vertu is so greet in hevene above,
That, if yow list, I shal wel have my love.
Thy temple wol I worshipe evermo,
And on thyn auter, wher I ryde or go,[10]
I wol don sacrifice, and fyres bete.[11]
And if ye wol nat so, my lady swete,
Than preye I thee, to-morwe with a spere
That Arcita me thurgh the herte bere.
Thanne rekke I noght, whan I have lost my lyf,
Though that Arcita winne hir to his wyf.
This is th'effect and ende of my preyere,
Yif me my love, thou blisful lady dere.'
Whan th'orisoun was doon of Palamon,
His sacrifice he dide, and that anon
Ful pitously, with alle circumstaunces,
Al telle I noght as now his observaunces.
But atte laste the statue of Venus shook,
And made a signe, wher-by that he took
That his preyere accepted was that day.
For thogh the signe shewed a delay,
Yet wiste he wel that graunted was his bone;
And with glad herte he wente him hoom ful sone.
The thridde houre inequal that Palamon
Bigan to Venus temple for to goon,
Up roos the sonne, and up roos Emelye,
And to the temple of Diane gan hye.
Hir maydens, that she thider with hir ladde,
Ful redily with hem the fyr they hadde,
Th'encens, the clothes, and the remenant al
That to the sacrifyce longen[12] shal;
The hornes fulle of meth,[13] as was the gyse;
Ther lakked noght to doon hir sacrifyse.
Smoking the temple, ful of clothes faire,
This Emelye, with herte debonaire,
Hir body wessh with water of a welle;
But how she dide hir ryte I dar nat telle,
But it be any thing in general;
And yet it were a game to heren al;
To him that meneth wel, it were no charge:[14]
But it is good a man ben at his large.[15]
Hir brighte heer was kempt, untressed al;
A corowne of a grene ook cerial[16]
Up-on hir heed was set ful fair and mete.
Two fyres on the auter gan she bete,
And dide hir thinges, as men may biholde
In Stace of Thebes,[17] and thise bokes olde.
Whan kindled was the fyr, with pitous chere
Un-to Diane she spak, as ye may here.

[1] to the main matter. [2] worthy.
[3] Each planet had its potent hour in the day.
[4] Adonis. [5] reveal. [6] certainly.
[7] According to. [8] care not to boast. [9] fame.
[10] whether I ride or walk. [11] kindle. [12] belong.
[13] mead. [14] no affliction. [15] be free (to tell or not).
[16] a kind of oak. [17] i.e. in the *Thebaiad* of Statius.

'O chaste goddesse of the wodes grene,
To whom bothe heven and erthe and see is sene,[1]
Quene of the regne of Pluto derk and lowe,
Goddesse of maydens, that myn herte hast knowe
Ful many a yeer, and woost what I desire,
As keep me fro thy vengeaunce and thyn ire,
That Attheon aboughte[2] cruelly.
Chaste goddesse, wel wostow that I
Desire to been a mayden al my lyf,
Ne never wol I be no love ne wyf.
I am, thou woost, yet of thy companye,
A mayde, and love hunting and venerye,
And for to walken in the wodes wilde,
And noght to been a wyf, and be with childe.
Noght wol I knowe companye of man.
Now help me, lady, sith ye may and can,
For tho thre formes[3] that thou hast in thee.
And Palamon, that hath swich love to me,
And eek Arcite, that loveth me so sore,
This grace I preye thee with-oute more,
As sende love and pees bitwixe hem two;
And fro me turne awey hir hertes so;
That al hir hote love, and hir desyr,
And al hir bisy torment, and hir fyr
Be queynt,[4] or turned in another place;
And if so be thou wolt not do me grace,
Or if my destinee be shapen so,
That I shal nedes have oon of hem two,
As sende me him that most desireth me.
Bihold, goddesse of clene chastitee,
The bittre teres that on my chekes falle.
Sin thou are mayde, and keper of us alle,
My maydenhede thou kepe and wel conserve,
And whyl I live a mayde, I wol thee serve.'
The fyres brenne up-on the auter clere,
Whyl Emelye was thus in hir preyere;
But sodeinly she saugh a sighte queynte,
For right anon oon of the fyres queynte,[5]
And quiked agayn, and after that anon
That other fyr was queynt, and al agon;
And as it queynte, it made a whistelinge,
As doon thise wete brondes in hir brenninge,
And at the brondes ende out-ran anoon
As it were blody dropes many oon;
For which so sore agast was Emelye,
That she was wel ny mad, and gan to crye,
For she ne wiste what it signifyed;
But only for the fere thus hath she cryed,
And weep, that it was pitee for to here.
And ther-with-al Diane gan appere,
With bowe in hond, right as an hunteresse,
And seyde: 'Doghter, stint thyn hevinesse.
Among the goddes hye it is affermed,
And by eterne word write and confermed,
Thou shalt ben wedded un-to oon of tho
That han for thee so muchel care and wo;
But un-to which of hem I may nat telle.
Farwel, for I ne may no lenger dwelle.
The fyres which that on myn auter brenne
Shul thee declaren, er that thou go henne,[6]
Thyn aventure of love, as in this cas.'
And with that word, the arwes in the cas
Of the goddesse clateren faste and ringe,
And forth she wente, and made a vanisshinge;
For which this Emelye astoned was,
And seyde, 'What amounteth this, allas!
I putte me in thy protectioun,
Diane, and in thy disposicioun.'
And hoom she gooth anon the nexte weye.
This is th'effect, ther is namore to seye.
The nexte houre of Mars folwinge this,
Arcite un-to the temple walked is
Of fierse Mars, to doon his sacrifyse,
With alle the rytes of his payen wyse.
With pitous herte and heigh devocioun,
Right thus to Mars he seyde his orisoun:
'O stronge god, that in the regnes colde
Of Trace honoured art, and lord y-holde,
And hast in every regne and every lond
Of armes al the brydel in thyn hond,
And hem fortunest as thee list devyse,
Accept of me my pitous sacrifyse.
If so be that my youthe may deserve,
And that my might be worthy for to serve
Thy godhede, that I may been oon of thyne,
Than preye I thee to rewe up-on my pyne.
For thilke peyne, and thilke hote fyr,
In which thou whylom brendest for desyr,
Whan that thou usedest the grete beautee
Of fayre yonge fresshe Venus free,
And haddest hir in armes at thy wille,
Al-though thee ones on a tyme misfille[7]
Whan Vulcanus had caught thee in his las,[8]
And fond thee ligging[9] by his wyf, allas!
For thilke sorwe that was in thyn herte,
Have routhe as wel up-on my peynes smerte.

[1] visible. [2] paid for, suffered for.
[3] Diana, Luna, and Proserpina. Cf. l. 1440.
[4] quenched (p.p.). [5] quenched (past tense).
[6] hence. [7] you once had bad luck.
[8] lace, net. [9] lying.

I am yong and unkonning,[1] as thou wost,
And, as I trowe, with love offended most,
That ever was any lyves[2] creature;
For she, that dooth[3] me al this wo endure,
Ne reccheth never wher I sinke or flete[4]
And wel I woot, er she me mercy hete,[5]
I moot[6] with strengthe winne hir in the place;
And wel I woot, withouten help or grace
Of thee, ne may my strengthe noght availle.
Than help me, lord, to-morwe in my bataille,
For thilke fyr that whylom brente thee,
As wel as thilke fyr now brenneth me;
And do that I to-morwe have victorie.
Myn be the travaille, and thyn be the glorie!
Thy soverein temple wol I most honouren
Of any place, and alwey most labouren
In thy plesaunce and in thy craftes stronge,
And in thy temple I wol my baner honge,
And alle the armes of my companye;
And evere-mo, un-to that day I dye,
Eterne fyr I wol biforn thee finde.
And eek to this avow I wol me binde:
My berd, myn heer that hongeth long adoun,
That never yet ne felte offensioun
Of rasour nor of shere, I wol thee yive,
And been thy trewe servant whyl I live.
Now lord, have routhe up-on my sorwes sore,
Yif me victorie, I aske thee namore.'
The preyere stinte of Arcita the stronge,
The ringes on the temple-dore that honge,
And eek the dores, clatereden ful faste,
Of which Arcita som-what him agaste.
The fyres brende up-on the auter brighte,
That it gan al the temple for to lighte;
And swete smel the ground anon up-yaf,
And Arcita anon his hand up-haf,[7]
And more encens in-to the fyr he caste,
With othere rytes mo; and atte laste
The statue of Mars bigan his hauberk ringe.
And with that soun he herde a murmuringe
Ful lowe and dim, that sayde thus, 'Victorie':
For which he yaf to Mars honour and glorie.
And thus with joye, and hope wel to fare,
Arcite anon un-to his inne is fare,
As fayn as fowel is of the brighte sonne.
And right anon swich stryf ther is bigonne
For thilke graunting, in the hevene above,
Bitwixe Venus, the goddesse of love,
And Mars, the sterne god armipotente,
That Jupiter was bisy it to stente;
Til that the pale Saturnus the colde,
That knew so manye of aventures olde,
Fond in his olde experience an art,
That he ful sone hath plesed every part.
As sooth is sayd, elde[8] hath greet avantage;
In elde is bothe wisdom and usage;
Men may the olde at-renne, and noght at-rede.[9]
Saturne anon, to stinten stryf and drede,
Al be it that it is agayn his kynde,
Of al this stryf he gan remedie fynde.
'My dere doghter Venus,' quod Saturne,
'My cours, that hath so wyde for to turne,[10]
Hath more power than wot any man.
Myn is the drenching[11] in the see so wan;
Myn is the prison in the derke cote;[12]
Myn is the strangling and hanging by the throte;
The murmure, and the cherles rebelling,
The groyning,[13] and the pryvee empoysoning:
I do vengeance and pleyn correccioun
Whyl I dwelle in the signe of the Leoun.
Myn is the ruine of the hye halles,
The falling of the toures and of the walles
Up-on the mynour or the carpenter.
I slow Sampsoun in shaking the piler;
And myne be the maladyes colde,[14]
The derke tresons, and the castes[15] olde;
My loking is the fader of pestilence.
Now weep namore, I shal doon diligence
That Palamon, that is thyn owne knight,
Shal have his lady, as thou hast him hight.[16]
Though Mars shal helpe his knight, yet nathelees
Bitwixe yow ther moot be som tyme pees,
Al be ye noght of o complexioun,[17]
That causeth al day swich divisioun.
I am thin ayel,[18] redy at thy wille;
Weep thou namore, I wol thy lust fulfille.'
Now wol I stinten of the goddes above,
Of Mars, and of Venus, goddesse of love,
And telle yow, as pleynly as I can,
The grete effect, for which that I bigan.

[1] unknowing. [2] live. [3] causes. [4] float. [5] promise. [6] must. [7] up-heaved. [8] old age. [9] out-run but not out-wit. [10] has a large orbit. [11] drowning. [12] out-building. [13] grumbling. [14] sinister. [15] tricks. [16] promised. [17] disposition. [18] grandfather.

Explicit tercia pars.
Sequitur pars quarta.

Greet was the feste in Athenes that day,
And eek the lusty seson of that May
Made every wight to been in swich plesaunce,
That al that Monday justen they and daunce,
And spenden it in Venus heigh servyse.
But by the cause that they sholde ryse
Erly, for to seen the grete fight,
Unto hir reste wente they at night.
And on the morwe, whan that day gan springe,
Of hors and harneys, noyse and clateringe
Ther was in hostelryes al aboute;
And to the paleys rood ther many a route
Of lordes, up-on stedes and palfreys.
Ther maystow seen devysing of herneys
So uncouth[1] and so riche, and wroght so weel
Of goldsmithrie, of browding,[2] and of steel;
The sheeldes brighte, testers,[3] and trappures;[4]
Gold-hewen helmes, hauberks, cote-armures;
Lordes in paraments[5] on hir courseres,
Knightes of retenue, and eek squyeres
Nailinge[6] the speres, and helmes bokelinge,
Gigginge[7] of sheeldes, with layneres[8] lacinge;
Ther as need is, they weren no-thing ydel;
The fomy stedes on the golden brydel
Gnawinge, and faste the armurers also
With fyle and hamer prikinge[9] to and fro;
Yemen[10] on fote, and communes many oon
With shorte staves, thikke as they may goon;
Pypes, trompes, nakers,[11] clariounes,
That in the bataille blowen blody sounes;
The paleys ful of peples up and doun,
Heer three, ther ten, holding hir questioun,
Divyninge of thise Theban knightes two.
Somme seyden thus, somme seyde it shal be so;
Somme helden with him with the blake berd,
Somme with the balled,[12] somme with the thikke-herd;[13]
Somme sayde, he loked grim and he wolde fighte;
He hath a sparth[14] of twenty pound of wighte.
Thus was the halle ful of divyninge,
Longe after that the sonne gan to springe.
The grete Theseus, that of his sleep awaked
With minstralcye and noyse that was maked,
Held yet the chambre of his paleys riche,
Til that the Thebane knightes, bothe y-liche[15]
Honoured, were into the paleys fet.[16]
Duk Theseus was at a window set,
Arrayed right as he were a god in trone.
The peple preesseth thider-ward ful sone
Him for to seen, and doon heigh reverence,
And eek to herkne his hest and his sentence.
An heraud on a scaffold made an ho,[17]
Til al the noyse of peple was y-do;
And whan he saugh the peple of noyse al stille,
Tho showed he the mighty dukes wille.
'The lord hath of his heigh discrecioun
Considered, that it were destruccioun
To gentil blood, to fighten in the gyse
Of mortal bataille now in this empryse;
Wherfore, to shapen that they shul not dye,
He wol his firste purpos modifye.
No man therfor, up[18] peyne of los of lyf,
No maner shot,[19] ne pollax,[20] ne short knyf
Into the listes sende, or thider bringe;
Ne short swerd for to stoke,[21] with poynt bytinge,
No man ne drawe, ne bere it by his syde.
Ne no man shal un-to his felawe ryde
But o cours, with a sharp y-grounde spere;
Foyne,[22] if him list, on fote, him-self to were.[23]
And he that is at meschief, shal be take,
And noght slayn, but be broght un-to the stake
That shal ben ordeyned on either syde;
But thider he shal by force, and ther abyde.
And if so falle, the chieftayn be take
On either syde, or elles slee his make,[24]
No lenger shal the turneyinge laste.
God spede yow; goth forth, and ley on faste.

[1] strange, rare. [2] embroidery. [3] head-pieces for man or steed. [4] trappings. [5] rich robes. [6] fitting the heads? [7] fitting the guiges or straps within. [8] lanyards, thongs. [9] spurring, hurrying. [10] Yeoman. [11] kettle-drums. [12] bald. [13] thick-haired. [14] battle-axe. [15] alike. [16] fetched. [17] cry. [18] upon. [19] shooting weapon, such as a crossbow. [20] pole-axe. [21] stab. [22] fence, ward. [23] defend. [24] fellow, i.e. rival.

With long swerd and with maces fight your fille.
Goth now your wey; this is the lordes wille.'
The voys of peple touchede the hevene,
So loude cryden they with mery stevene:
'God save swich a lord, that is so good,
He wilneth no destruccioun of blood!'
Up goon the trompes and the melodye.
And to the listes rit[1] the companye
By ordinaunce, thurgh-out the citee large,
Hanged with cloth of gold, and nat with sarge.[2]
Ful lyk a lord this noble duk gan ryde,
Thise two Thebanes up-on either syde;
And after rood the quene, and Emelye,
And after that another companye
Of oon and other, after hir degree.
And thus they passen thurgh-out the citee,
And to the listes come they by tyme.
It nas not of the day yet fully pryme,[3]
Whan set was Theseus ful riche and hye,
Ipolita the quene and Emelye,
And other ladies in degrees[4] aboute.
Un-to the seetes preesseth al the route.
And west-ward, thurgh the gates under Marte,
Arcite, and eek the hundred of his parte,
With baner reed is entred right anon;
And in that selve[5] moment Palamon
Is under Venus, est-ward in the place,
With baner whyt, and hardy chere and face.
In al the world, to seken up and doun,
So even with-outen variacioun,
Ther nere swiche companyes tweye.
For ther nas noon so wys that coude seye,
That any hadde of other avauntage
Of worthinesse, ne of estaat, ne age,
So even were they chosen, for to gesse.
And in two renges[6] faire they hem dresse.
Whan that hir names rad were everichoon,
That in hir nombre gyle were ther noon,
Tho were the gates shet, and cryed was loude:
'Do now your devoir, yonge knightes proude!'
The heraudes lefte hir priking up and doun;
Now ringen trompes loude and clarioun;
Ther is namore to seyn, but west and est
In goon the speres ful sadly in arest;[7]
In goth the sharpe spore in-to the syde.
Ther seen men who can juste, and who can ryde;
Ther shiveren shaftes up-on sheeldes thikke;
He feleth thurgh the herte-spoon[8] the prikke.
Up springen speres twenty foot on highte;
Out goon the swerdes as the silver brighte.
The helmes they to-hewen and to-shrede;
Out brest the blood, with sterne stremes rede.
With mighty maces the bones they to-breste.[9]
He thurgh the thikkeste of the throng gan threste,[10]
Ther stomblen stedes stronge, and doun goth al.
He rolleth under foot as dooth a bal.
He foyneth on his feet with his tronchoun,[11]
And he him hurtleth with his hors adoun.
He thurgh the body is hurt, and sithen y-take,
Maugree his heed, and broght un-to the stake;
As forward[12] was, right ther he moste abyde;
Another lad is on that other syde.
And som tyme dooth hem Theseus to reste,
Hem to refresshe, and drinken if hem leste.
Ful ofte a-day han thise Thebanes two
Togidre y-met, and wroght his felawe wo;
Unhorsed hath ech other of hem tweye.
Ther nas no tygre in the vale of Galgopheye,
Whan that hir whelp is stole, whan it is lyte,[13]
So cruel on the hunte,[14] as is Arcite
For jelous herte upon this Palamoun:
Ne in Belmarye ther nis so fel leoun,
That hunted is, or for his hunger wood,
Ne of his praye desireth so the blood,
As Palamon to sleen his fo Arcite.
The jelous strokes on hir helmes byte;
Out renneth blood on both hir sydes rede.
Som tyme an ende ther is of every dede;
For er the sonne un-to the reste wente,
The stronge king Emetreus gan hente[15]
This Palamon, as he faught with Arcite,
And made his swerd depe in his flesh to byte;
And by the force of twenty is he take
Unyolden,[16] and y-drawe unto the stake.
And in the rescous[17] of this Palamoun
The stronge king Ligurge is born adoun;
And king Emetreus, for al his strengthe,
Is born out of his sadel a swerdes lengthe,

[1] rideth. [2] coarse cloth. [3] mid-morn.
[4] tiers. [5] very. [6] ranks.
[7] The spears were lowered firmly into the rest.
[8] breast, brisket. [9] smash. [10] thrust.
[11] defends himself with his broken lance-butt.
[12] agreement. [13] little. [14] hunter.
[15] sieze. [16] unyielding. [17] rescue.

So hitte him Palamon er he were take;
But al for noght, he was broght to the stake.
His hardy herte mighte him helpe naught;
He moste abyde, whan that he was caught,
By force, and eek by composicioun.[1]
Who sorweth now but woful Palamoun,
That moot namore goon agayn to fighte?
And whan that Theseus had seyn this sighte,
Un-to the folk that foghten thus echoon
He cryde, 'Ho! namore, for it is doon!
I wol be trewe juge, and no partye.
Arcite of Thebes shal have Emelye,
That by his fortune hath hir faire y-wonne.'
Anon ther is a noyse of peple bigonne
For joye of this, so loude and heigh with-alle,
It semed that the listes sholde falle.
What can now faire Venus doon above?
What seith she now? what dooth this quene of love?
But wepeth so, for wanting of hir wille,
Til that hir teres in the listes fille;
She seyde: 'I am ashamed, doutelees.'
Saturnus seyde: 'Doghter, hold thy pees.
Mars hath his wille, his knight hath al his bone,[2]
And, by myn heed, thou shalt ben esed sone.'
The trompes, with the loude minstralcye,
The heraudes, that ful loude yolle[3] and crye,
Been in hir wele,[4] for joye of daun[5] Arcite.
But herkneth me, and stinteth now a lyte,
Which a miracle ther bifel anon.
This fierse Arcite hath of his helm y-don,
And on a courser, for to shewe his face,
He priketh endelong the large place,
Loking upward up-on this Emelye;
And she agayn him caste a freendlich yë,
(For wommen, as to speken in comune,
They folwen al the favour of fortune);[6]
And was al his in chiere, as in his herte.
Out of the ground a furie infernal sterte,
From Pluto sent, at requeste of Saturne,
For which his hors for fere gan to turne,
And leep asyde, and foundred as he leep;
And, er that Arcite may taken keep,
He pighte[7] him on the pomel[8] of his heed,
That in the place he lay as he were deed,
His brest to-brosten[9] with his sadel-bowe.
As blak he lay as any cole or crowe,
So was the blood y-ronnen in his face.
Anon he was y-born out of the place

[1] agreement. [2] boon. [3] yell. [4] weal, happiness.
[5] sir. [6] Several good MSS. omit these two lines.
[7] pitched. [8] top. [9] broken.

With herte soor, to Theseus paleys.
Tho was he corven[10] out of his harneys,
And in a bed y-brought ful faire and blyve,[11]
For he was yet in memorie[12] and alyve,
And alway crying after Emelye.
Duk Theseus, with al his companye,
Is comen hoom to Athenes his citee,
With alle blisse and greet solempnitee.
Al be it that this aventure was falle,
He nolde[13] noght disconforten hem alle.
Men seyde eek, that Arcite shal nat dye;
He shal ben heled of his maladye.
And of another thing they were as fayn,
That of hem alle was ther noon y-slayn,
Al were they sore y-hurt, and namely oon,
That with a spere was thirled his brest-boon.[14]
To othere woundes, and to broken armes,
Some hadden salves, and some hadden charmes;
Fermacies[15] of herbes, and eek save[16]
They dronken, for they wolde hir limes have.
For which this noble duk, as he wel can,
Conforteth and honoureth every man,
And made revel al the longe night,
Un-to the straunge lordes, as was right.
Ne ther was holden no disconfitinge,
But as a justes or a tourneyinge;
For soothly ther was no disconfiture,
For falling nis nat but an aventure;
Ne to be lad with fors un-to the stake
Unyolden, and with twenty knightes take,
O persone allone, with-outen mo,
And haried forth by arme, foot, and to,
And eek his stede driven forth with staves,
With footmen, bothe yemen and eek knaves,
It nas aretted[17] him no vileinye,
Ther may no man clepen it cowardye.
For which anon duk Theseus leet crye,
To stinten alle rancour and envye,
The gree[18] as wel of o syde as of other,
And either syde y-lyk, as otheres brother;
And yaf hem yiftes after hir degree,
And fully heeld a feste dayes three;
And conveyed the kinges worthily
Out of his toun a journee[19] largely.
And hoom wente every man the righte way.
Ther was namore, but 'far wel, have good day!'

[10] cut. [11] quickly. [12] conscious. [13] would not.
[14] Whose breast was pierced. [15] Prescriptions.
[16] salvia, sage. [17] imputed.
[18] standing, superiority. [19] day's march.

Of this bataille I wol namore endyte,
But speke of Palamon and of Arcite.
Swelleth the brest of Arcite, and the sore
Encreesseth at his herte more and more.
The clothered blood, for any lechecraft,[1]
Corrupteth, and is in his bouk [2] y-laft,
That neither veyne-blood,[3] ne ventusinge,[4]
Ne drinke of herbes may ben his helpinge.
The vertu expulsif, or animal,
Fro thilke vertu cleped natural [5]
Ne may the venim voyden, ne expelle.
The pypes of his longes gonne to swelle,
And every lacerte [6] in his brest adoun
Is shent [7] with venim and corrupcioun.
Him gayneth [8] neither, for to gete his lyf,
Vomyt upward, ne dounward laxatif;
Al is to-brosten [9] thilke regioun,
Nature hath now no dominacioun.
And certeinly, ther nature wol nat wirche,
Far-wel, phisyk! go ber the man to chirche!
This al and som, that Arcita mot dye,
For which he sendeth after Emelye,
And Palamon, that was his cosin dere;
Than seyde he thus, as ye shul after here.
'Naught may the woful spirit in myn herte
Declare o poynt of alle my sorwes smerte
To yow, my lady, that I love most;
But I biquethe the service of my gost
To yow aboven every creature,
Sin that my lyf may no lenger dure.
Allas, the wo! allas, the peynes stronge,
That I for yow have suffred, and so longe!
Allas, the deeth! allas, myn Emelye!
Allas, departing of our companye!
Allas, myn hertes quene! allas, my wyf!
Myn hertes lady, endere of my lyf!
What is this world? what asketh men to have?
Now with his love, now in his colde grave
Allone, with-outen any companye.
Far-wel, my swete fo! myn Emelye!
And softe tak me in your armes tweye,
For love of God, and herkneth what I seye.
I have heer with my cosin Palamon
Had stryf and rancour, many a day a-gon,
For love of yow, and for my jelousye.
And Jupiter so wis my soule gye,[10]
To speken of a servant [11] proprely,
With alle circumstaunces trewely,
That is to seyn, trouthe, honour, and knighthede,
Wisdom, humblesse, estaat, and heigh kinrede,
Fredom, and al that longeth to that art,
So Jupiter have of my soule part,
As in this world right now ne knowe I non
So worthy to ben loved as Palamon,
That serveth yow, and wol don al his lyf.
And if that ever ye shul been a wyf,
Foryet nat Palamon, the gentil man.'
And with that word his speche faille gan,
For from his feet up to his brest was come
The cold of deeth, that hadde him overcome.
And yet more-over, in his armes two
The vital strengthe is lost, and al ago.
Only the intellect, with-outen more,
That dwelled in his herte syk and sore,
Gan faillen, when the herte felte deeth,
Dusked his eyen two, and failled breeth.
But on his lady yet caste he his yë;
His laste word was, 'Mercy, Emelye!'
His spirit chaunged hous, and wente ther,
As I cam never, I can nat tellen wher.
Therfor I stinte, I nam no divinistre;[12]
Of soules finde I nat in this registre,
Ne me ne list thilke opiniouns to telle
Of hem, though that they wryten wher they dwelle.
Arcite is cold, ther Mars his soule gye;[13]
Now wol I speken forth of Emelye.
Shrighte [14] Emelye, and howleth Palamon,
And Theseus his suster took anon
Swowninge, and bar hir fro the corps away.
What helpeth it to tarien forth the day,
To tellen how she weep, bothe eve and morwe?
For in swich cas wommen have swich sorwe,
Whan that hir housbonds been from hem ago,
That for the more part they sorwen so,
Or elles fallen in swich maladye,
That at the laste certeinly they dye.
Infinite been the sorwes and the teres
Of olde folk, and folk of tendre yeres,
In al the toun, for deeth of this Theban;
For him ther wepeth bothe child and man;
So greet a weping was ther noon, certayn,
Whan Ector was y-broght, al fresh y-slayn,

1 clotted blood, in spite of all the art of physicians.
2 body, trunk. 3 blood-letting. 4 cupping.
5 Besides the animal and the natural virtues, there was a third, the vital, which is mentioned in l. 1944.
6 muscle. 7 ruined. 8 It avails him.
9 completely crushed.
10 As surely as I wish Jupiter to guide my soul.
11 lover. 12 diviner. 13 guide. 14 Shrieked.

To Troye; allas! the pitee that was ther,
Cracching[1] of chekes, rending eek of heer.
'Why woldestow be deed,' thise wommen crye,
'And haddest gold y-nough, and Emelye?'
No man mighte gladen Theseus,
Savinge his olde fader Egeus,
That knew this worldes transmutacioun,
As he had seyn it chaungen up and doun,
Joye after wo, and wo after gladnesse:
And shewed hem ensamples and lyknesse.
'Right as ther deyed never man,' quod he,
'That he ne livede in erthe in som degree,
Right so ther livede never man,' he seyde,
'In al this world, that som tyme he ne deyde.
This world nis but a thurghfare ful of wo,
And we ben pilgrimes, passinge to and fro;
Deeth is an ende of every worldly sore.'
And over al this yet seyde he muchel more
To this effect, ful wysly to enhorte
The peple, that they sholde hem reconforte.

Duk Theseus, with al his busy cure,
Caste now wher that the sepulture[2]
Of good Arcite may best y-maked be,
And eek most honurable in his degree.
And at the laste he took conclusioun,
That ther as first Arcite and Palamoun
Hadden for love the bataille hem bitwene,
That in that selve grove, swote and grene,
Ther as he hadde his amorous desires,
His compleynt, and for love his hote fires,
He wolde make a fyr, in which th'office
Funeral he mighte al accomplice;
And leet comaunde anon to hakke and hewe
The okes olde, and leye hem on a rewe
In colpons[3] wel arrayed for to brenne;
His officers with swifte feet they renue
And ryde anon at his comaundement.
And after this, Theseus hath y-sent
After a bere,[4] and it al over-spradde
With cloth of gold, the richest that he hadde.
And of the same suyte[5] he cladde Arcite;
Upon his hondes hadde he gloves whyte;
Eek on his heed a croune of laurer grene,
And in his hond a swerd ful bright and kene.

[1] Scratching.
[2] The burial rites which follow are taken largely from the *Thebaiad* of Statius.
[3] piles. [4] bier. [5] suit.

He leyde him, bare the visage, on the bere,
Therwith he weep that pitee was to here.
And for the peple sholde seen him alle,
Whan it was day, he broghte him to the halle,
That roreth of the crying and the soun.

Tho cam this woful Theban Palamoun,
With flotery[6] berd, and ruggy[7] asshy heres,
In clothes blake, y-dropped al with teres;
And, passing othere of weping, Emelye,
The rewfulleste of al the companye.
In as muche as the service sholde be
The more noble and riche in his degree,
Duk Theseus leet forth three stedes bringe,
That trapped were in steel al gliteringe,
And covered with the armes of daun Arcite.
Up-on thise stedes, that weren grete and whyte,
Ther seten folk, of which oon bar his sheeld,
Another his spere up in his hondes heeld;
The thridde bar with him his bowe Turkeys,
Of brend gold was the cas, and eek the harneys;
And riden forth a pas with sorweful chere
Toward the grove, as ye shul after here.
The nobleste of the Grekes that ther were
Upon hir shuldres carieden the bere,
With slakke pas, and eyen rede and wete,
Thurgh-out the citee, by the maister-strete,
That sprad was al with blak, and wonder hye
Right of the same is al the strete y-wrye.[8]
Up-on the right hond wente old Egeus,
And on that other syde duk Theseus,
With vessels in hir hand of gold ful fyn,
Al ful of hony, milk, and blood, and wyn;
Eek Palamon, with ful greet companye;
And after that cam woful Emelye,
With fyr in honde, as was that tyme the gyse,
To do th'office of funeral servyse.

Heigh labour, and ful greet apparaillinge
Was at the service and the fyr-makinge,
That with his grene top the heven raughte,[9]
And twenty fadme of brede[10] the armes straughte;[11]
This is to seyn, the bowes were so brode.
Of stree[12] first ther was leyd ful many a lode.
But how the fyr was maked up on highte,
And eek the names how the treës highte,

[6] flowing. [7] rough. [8] decked. [9] reached.
[10] in breadth. [11] stretched. [12] straw.

As ook, firre, birch, asp, alder, holm, popler,
Wilow, elm, plane, ash, box, chasteyn,[1] lind, laurer,
Mapul, thorn, beech, hasel, ew, whippel-[2] tree,
How they weren feld, shal nat be told for me;
Ne how the goddes ronnen up and doun,
Disherited of hir habitacioun,
In which they woneden in reste and pees,
Nymphes, Faunes, and Amadrides;[3]
Ne how the bestes and the briddes alle
Fledden for fere, whan the wode was falle;
Ne how the ground agast was of the light,
That was nat wont to seen the sonne bright;
Ne how the fyr was couched[4] first with stree,
And than with drye stokkes cloven a three,
And than with grene wode and spycerye,
And than with cloth of gold and with perrye,[5]
And gerlandes hanging with ful many a flour,
The mirre, th'encens, with al so greet odour;
Ne how Arcite lay among al this,
Ne what richesse aboute his body is;
Ne how that Emelye, as was the gyse,
Putte in the fyr of funeral servyse;
Ne how she swowned whan men made the fyr,
Ne what she spak, ne what was hir desyr;
Ne what jeweles men in the fyr tho caste,
Whan that the fyr was greet and brente faste;
Ne how som caste hir[6] sheeld, and som hir spere,
And of hir vestiments, whiche that they were,
And cuppes ful of wyn, and milk, and blood,
Into the fyr, that brente as it were wood;
Ne how the Grekes with an huge route
Thryës riden al the fyr aboute
Up-on the left hand, with a loud shoutinge,
And thryës with hir speres clateringe;
And thryës how the ladies gonne crye;
Ne how that lad was hom-ward Emelye;
Ne how Arcite is brent to asshen colde;
Ne how that liche-wake was y-holde
Al thilke night, ne how the Grekes pleye
The wake-pleyes, ne kepe I nat to seye;

Who wrastleth best naked, with oille enoynt,
Ne who that bar him best, in no disjoynt.[7]
I wol nat tellen eek how that they goon
Hoom til Athenes, whan the pley is doon;
But shortly to the poynt than wol I wende,
And maken of my longe tale an ende.
By processe and by lengthe of certeyn yeres
Al stinted is the moorning and the teres.
Of Grekes, by oon general assent,
Than semed me ther was a parlement
At Athenes, up-on certeyn poynts and cas;
Among the whiche poynts y-spoken was
To have with certeyn contrees alliaunce,
And have fully of Thebans obeisaunce.
For which this noble Theseus anon
Leet senden after gentil Palamon,
Unwist of him[8] what was the cause and why;
But in his blake clothes sorwefully
He cam at his comaundemente in hye.[9]
Tho sente Theseus for Emelye.
Whan they were set, and hust[10] was al the place,
And Theseus abiden hadde a space
Er any word cam from his wyse brest,
His eyen sette he ther as was his lest,[11]
And with a sad visage he syked[12] stille,
And after that right thus he seyde his wille.
'The firste moevere of the cause above,[13]
Whan he first made the faire cheyne of love,
Greet was th'effect, and heigh was his entente;
Wel wiste he why, and what ther-of he mente;
For with that faire cheyne of love he bond
The fyr, the eyr, the water, and the lond
In certeyn boundes, that they may nat flee;
That same prince and that moevere,' quod he,
'Hath stablissed, in this wrecched world adoun,
Certeyne dayes and duracioun
To al that is engendred in this place,
Over the whiche day they may nat pace,
Al mowe they yet tho dayes wel abregge;
Ther needeth non auctoritee allegge,
For it is preved by experience,
But that me list declaren my sentence.
Than may men by this ordre wel discerne,
That thilke moevere stable is and eterne.

[1] chestnut. [2] cornel. [3] Hamadryads.
[4] laid. [5] jewelry. [6] their.
[7] failure. [8] He being ignorant. [9] haste.
[10] hushed. [11] pleasure. [12] sighed.
[13] The passage is from various parts of the *De Consolatione Philosophiae* of Boethius.

Wel may men knowe, but it be a fool,
That every part deryveth from his hool.
For nature hath nat take his beginning
Of no party ne cantel[1] of a thing,
But of a thing that parfit is and stable,
Descending so, til it be corrumpable.
And therfore, of his wyse purveyaunce,
He hath so wel biset his ordinaunce,
That speces of thinges and progressiouns
Shullen enduren by successiouns,
And nat eterne be, with-oute lyë:
This maistow understonde and seen at yë.
'Lo the ook, that hath so long a norisshinge
From tyme that it first biginneth springe,
And hath so long a lyf, as we may see,
Yet at the laste wasted is the tree.
'Considereth eek, how that the harde stoon
Under our feet, on which we trede and goon,
Yit wasteth it, as it lyth by the weye.
The brode river somtyme wexeth dreye.
The grete tounes see we wane and wende.
Than may ye see that al this thing hath ende.
'Of man and womman seen we wel also,
That nedeth, in oon of thise termes two,
This is to seyn, in youthe or elles age,
He moot ben deed, the king as shal a page;
Som in his bed, som in the depe see,
Som in the large feeld, as men may se;
Ther helpeth noght, al goth that ilke weye.
Thanne may I seyn that al this thing moot deye.
What maketh this but Jupiter the king?
The which is prince and cause of alle thing,
Converting al un-to his propre welle,
From which it is deryved, sooth to telle.
And here-agayns no creature on lyve
Of no degree availleth for to stryve.
'Thanne is it wisdom, as it thinketh me,
To maken vertu of necessitee,
And take it wel, that we may nat eschue,
And namely that to us alle is due.
And who-so gruccheth[2] ought, he dooth folye,
And rebel is to him that al may gye.
And certeinly a man hath most honour
To dyen in his excellence and flour,
Whan he is siker of his gode name;
Than hath he doon his freend, ne him, no shame.

[1] fragment. [2] murmurs.

And gladder oghte his freend ben of his deeth,
Whan with honour up-yolden is his breeth,
Than whan his name apalled[3] is for age;
For al forgeten is his vasselage.[4]
Than is it best, as for a worthy fame,
To dyen whan that he is best of name.
The contrarie of al this is wilfulnesse.
Why grucchen we? why have we hevinesse
That good Arcite, of chivalrye flour,
Departed is, with duetee and honour,
Out of this foule prison of this lyf?
Why grucchen heer his cosin and his wyf
Of his wel-fare that loved hem so weel?
Can he hem thank? nay, God wot, never a deel,
That bothe his soule and eek hem-self offende,
And yet they mowe hir lustes nat amende.
'What may I conclude of this longe serie,
But, after wo, I rede us to be merie,
And thanken Jupiter of al his grace?
And, er that we departen from this place,
I rede[5] that we make, of sorwes two,
O parfyt joye, lasting ever-mo;
And loketh now, wher most sorwe is herinne,
Ther wol we first amenden and biginne.
'Suster,' quod he, 'this is my fulle assent,
With al th'avys heer of my parlement,
That gentil Palamon, your owne knight,
That serveth yow with wille, herte, and might,
And ever hath doon, sin that ye first him knewe,
That ye shul, of your grace, up-on him rewe,
And taken him for housbonde and for lord:
Leen me your hond, for this is our acord.
Lat see now of your wommanly pitee.
He is a kinges brother sone, pardee;
And, though he were a povre bacheler,[6]
Sin he hath served yow so many a yeer,
And had for yow so greet adversitee,
It moste been considered, leveth me;
For gentil mercy oghte to passen right.'
Than seyde he thus to Palamon ful right;
'I trowe ther nedeth litel sermoning
To make yow assente to this thing.

[3] faded. [4] prowess.
[5] advise. [6] i.e. below a knight.

Com neer, and tak your lady by the hond.'
Bitwixen hem was maad anon the bond,
That highte matrimoine or mariage,
By al the counseil and the baronage.
And thus with alle blisse and melodye
Hath Palamon y-wedded Emelye.
And God, that al this wyde world hath wroght,
Sende him his love, that hath it dere a-boght.
For now is Palamon in alle wele,
Living in blisse, in richesse, and in hele;
And Emelye him loveth so tendrely,
And he hir serveth al-so gentilly,
That never was ther no word hem bitwene
Of jelousye, or any other tene.
Thus endeth Palamon and Emelye;
And God save al this faire companye! — Amen.

Here is ended the Knightes Tale.

THE PRIORESSES TALE

THER was in Asie, in a greet citee,
Amonges Cristen folk, a Jewerye,[1]
Sustened by a lord of that contree
For foule usure and lucre of vilanye,
Hateful to Crist and to his companye;
And thurgh the strete men mighte ryde or wende,
For it was free, and open at either ende.

A litel scole of Cristen folk ther stood
Doun at the ferther ende, in which ther were
Children an heep, y-comen of Cristen blood,
That lerned in that scole yeer by yere
Swich maner doctrine as men used there,
This is to seyn, to singen and to rede,
As smale children doon in hir childhede.

Among thise children was a widwes sone,
A litel clergeon,[2] seven yeer of age,
That day by day to scole was his wone,[3]
And eek also, wher-as he saugh th'image
Of Cristes moder, hadde he in usage,
As him was taught, to knele adoun and seye
His *Ave Marie*, as he goth by the weye.

[1] The sharply defined Jewish quarter of a mediæval town.
[2] clerk, cleric. [3] custom.

Thus hath this widwe hir litel sone y-taught
Our blisful lady, Cristes moder dere,
To worshipe ay, and he forgat it naught,
For sely[4] child wol alday sone lere;[5]
But ay, whan I remembre on this matere,
Seint Nicholas stant ever in my presence,
For he so yong to Crist did reverence.[6]

This litel child, his litel book lerninge,
As he sat in the scole at his prymer,
He *Alma redemptoris* herde singe,
As children lerned hir antiphoner;
And, as he dorste, he drough him ner and ner,[8]
And herkned ay the wordes and the note,
Til he the firste vers coude al by rote.

Noght wiste he what this Latin was to seye,
For he so yong and tendre was of age;
But on a day his felaw gan he preye
T'expounden him this song in his langage,
Or telle him why this song was in usage;
This preyde he him to construe and declare
Ful ofte tyme upon his knowes[9] bare.

His felaw, which that elder was than he,
Answerde him thus: 'This song, I have herd seye,
Was maked of our blisful lady free,
Hir to salue,[10] and eek hir for to preye
To been our help and socour whan we deye.
I can no more expounde in this matere;
I lerne song, I can but smal grammere.'

'And is this song maked in reverence
Of Cristes moder?' seyde this innocent;
'Now certes, I wol do my diligence
To conne it al, er Cristemasse is went;
Though that I for my prymer shal be shent,[11]
And shal be beten thryës in an houre,
I wol it conne, our lady for to honoure.'

His felaw taughte him homward prively,
Fro day to day, til he coude it by rote,
And than he song it wel and boldely
Fro word to word, acording with the note;
Twyës a day it passed thurgh his throte,
To scoleward and homward whan he wente;
On Cristes moder set was his entente.

[4] innocent, good. [5] learn.
[6] As a young infant St. Nicholas could not suck on Wednesdays or Fridays.
[7] book of responsive songs, anthems.
[8] nearer and nearer. [9] knees.
[10] hail, greet. [11] scolded.

As I have seyd, thurgh-out the Jewerye
This litel child, as he cam to and fro,
Ful merily than wolde he singe, and crye
O Alma redemptoris ever-mo.
The swetnes hath his herte perced so
Of Cristes moder, that, to hir to preye,
He can nat stinte of singing by the weye.

Our firste fo, the serpent Sathanas,
That hath in Jewes herte his waspes nest,
Up swal,[1] and seide, 'O Hebraik peple, allas!
Is this to yow a thing that is honest,[2]
That swich a boy shal walken as him lest
In your despyt, and singe of swich sentence,
Which is agayn your lawes reverence?'

Fro thennes forth the Jewes han conspyred
This innocent out of this world to chace;
An homicyde ther-to han they hyred,
That in an aley hadde a privee place;
And as the child gan for-by for to pace,
This cursed Jew him hente and heeld him faste,
And kitte his throte, and in a pit him caste.

I seye that in a wardrobe[3] they him threwe
Wher-as these Jewes purgen hir entraille.
O cursed folk of Herodes al newe,
What may your yvel entente yow availle?
Mordre wol out, certein, it wol nat faille,
And namely ther th'onour of God shal sprede,
The blood out cryeth on your cursed dede.

'O martir, souded[4] to virginitee,
Now maystou singen, folwing ever in oon
The whyte lamb celestial,' quod she,
'Of which the grete evangelist, seint John,
In Pathmos wroot, which seith that they that goon
Biforn this lamb, and singe a song al newe,
That never, fleshly, wommen they ne knewe.'

This povre widwe awaiteth al that night
After hir litel child, but he cam noght;
For which, as sone as it was dayes light,
With face pale of drede and bisy thoght,
She hath at scole and elles-wher him soght,
Til finally she gan so fer espye
That he last seyn was in the Jewerye.

With modres pitee in hir brest enclosed,
She gooth, as she were half out of hir minde,
To every place wher she hath supposed
By lyklihede hir litel child to finde;
And ever on Cristes moder meke and kinde
She cryde, and atte laste thus she wroghte,
Among the cursed Jewes she him soghte.

She frayneth[5] and she preyeth pitously
To every Jew that dwelte in thilke place,
To telle hir, if hir child wente oght for-by.
They seyde, 'nay'; but Jesu, of his grace,
Yaf in hir thought, inwith a litel space,
That in that place after hir sone she cryde,
Wher he was casten in a pit bisyde.

O grete God, that parfournest thy laude
By mouth of innocents, lo heer thy might!
This gemme of chastitee, this emeraude,
And eek of martirdom the ruby bright,
Ther he with throte y-corven[6] lay upright,[7]
He '*Alma redemptoris*' gan to singe
So loude, that al the place gan to ringe.

The Cristen folk, that thurgh the strete wente,
In comen, for to wondre up-on this thing,
And hastily they for the provost sente;
He cam anon with-outen tarying,
And herieth[8] Crist that is of heven king,
And eek his moder, honour of mankinde,
And after that, the Jewes leet he binde.

This child with pitous lamentacioun
Up-taken was, singing his song alway;
And with honour of greet processioun
They carien him un-to the nexte abbay.
His moder swowning by the bere lay;
Unnethe[9] might the peple that was there
This newe Rachel bringe fro his bere.

With torment and with shamful deth echon
This provost dooth thise Jewes for to sterve[10]
That of this mordre wiste, and that anon;
He nolde no swich cursednesse observe.[11]
Yvel shal have that yvel wol deserve.
Therfor with wilde hors[12] he dide hem drawe,[13]
And after that he heng hem by the lawe.

[1] swelled. [2] decent. [3] privy. [4] devoted. [5] inquires. [6] carved, cut. [7] on his back. [8] praiseth. [9] Scarcely. [10] die. [11] countenance. [12] horses. [13] i.e. to the place of execution.

Up-on his bere ay lyth this innocent
Biforn the chief auter, whyl masse laste,
And after that, the abbot with his covent
Han sped hem for to burien him ful faste;
And whan they holy water on him caste,
Yet spak this child, whan spreynd[1] was holy water,
And song — '*O Alma redemptoris mater!*'

This abbot, which that was an holy man
As monkes been, or elles oghten be,
This yonge child to conjure he bigan,
And seyde, 'O dere child, I halse[2] thee,
In vertu of the holy Trinitee,
Tel me what is thy cause for to singe,
Sith that thy throte is cut, to my seminge?'

'My throte is cut un-to my nekke-boon,'
Seyde this child, 'and, as by wey of kinde,
I sholde have deyed, ye, longe tyme agoon;
But Jesu Crist, as ye in bokes finde,
Wil that his glorie laste and be in minde;
And, for the worship of his moder dere,
Yet may I singe "*O Alma*" loude and clere.

This welle of mercy, Cristes moder swete,
I lovede alwey, as after my conninge;[3]
And whan that I my lyf sholde forlete,[4]
To me she cam, and bad me for to singe
This antem verraily in my deyinge,
As ye han herd; and, whan that I had songe,
Me thoughte, she leyde a greyn up-on my tonge.

Wherfor I singe, and singe I moot certeyn
In honour of that blisful mayden free,
Til fro my tonge of-taken is the greyn.
And afterward thus seyde she to me,
"My litel child, now wol I fecche thee
Whan that the greyn is fro thy tonge y-take;
Be nat agast, I wol thee nat forsake."'

This holy monk, this abbot, him mene I,
Him tonge out-caughte, and took a-wey the greyn,
And he yaf up the goost ful softely.
And whan this abbot had this wonder seyn,
His salte teres trikled doun as reyn,

[1] sprinkled. [2] conjure.
[3] as well as I knew how. [4] forsake.

And gruf[5] he fil al plat up-on the grounde,
And stille he lay as he had been y-bounde.

The covent eek lay on the pavement
Weping, and herien[6] Cristes moder dere;
And after that they ryse, and forth ben went,
And toke awey this martir fro his bere,
And in a tombe of marbul-stones clere
Enclosen they his litel body swete;
Ther he is now, God leve us for to mete.

O yonge Hugh of Lincoln, slayn also
With cursed Jewes, as it is notable,
For it nis but a litel whyle ago;
Preye eek for us, we sinful folk unstable,
That, of his mercy, God so merciable
On us his grete mercy multiplye,
For reverence of his moder Marye. Amen.

Here is ended the Prioresses Tale.

PROLOGUE TO SIR THOPAS

Bihold the murye wordes of the Host to Chaucer

WHAN seyd was al this miracle, every man
As sobre was, that wonder was to see,
Til that our hoste japen[7] tho bigan,
And than at erst he looked up-on me,
And seyde thus, 'What man artow?' quod he;
'Thou lokest as thou woldest finde an hare,
For ever up-on the ground I see thee stare.

Approche neer, and loke up merily.
Now war yow, sirs, and lat this man have place;
He in the waast is shape as wel as I;
This were a popet in an arm t'enbrace
For any womman, smal and fair of face.
He semeth elvish by his contenaunce,
For un-to no wight dooth he daliaunce.

Sey now somwhat, sin other folk han sayd;
Tel us a tale of mirthe, and that anoon;' —
'Hoste,' quod I, 'ne beth nat yvel apayd,[8]
For other tale certes can I noon,
But of a ryme I lerned longe agoon.'
'Ye, that is good,' quod he; 'now shul we here
Som deyntee thing, me thinketh by his chere.'

[5] groveling, i.e. upon his face. [6] praise.
[7] jest. [8] be not ill-pleased.

SIR THOPAS

Here biginneth Chaucers Tale of Thopas

Listeth, lordes, in good entent,
And I wol telle verrayment
Of mirthe and of solas;
Al of a knyght was fair and gent
In bataille and in tourneyment,
His name was sir Thopas.

Y-born he was in fer contree,
In Flaundres, al biyonde the see,
At Popering, in the place;
His fader was a man ful free,
And lord he was of that contree,
As it was Goddes grace

Sir Thopas wex[1] a doghty swayn,
Whyt was his face as payndemayn,[2]
His lippes rede as rose;
His rode[3] is lyk scarlet in grayn,[4]
And I yow telle in good certayn,
He hadde a semely nose.

His heer, his berd was lyk saffroun,
That to his girdle raughte[5] adoun;
His shoon of Cordewane.[6]
Of Brugges[7] were his hosen broun,
His robe was of ciclatoun,[8]
That coste many a jane.[9]

He coude[10] hunte at wilde deer,
And ryde an hauking for riveer,[11]
With grey goshauk on honde;
Ther-to he was a good archeer,
Of wrastling was ther noon his peer,
Ther any ram shal stonde.[12]

Ful many a mayde, bright in bour,
They moorne for him, paramour,
Whan hem were bet[13] to slepe;
But he was chast and no lechour,
And sweet as is the bremble-flour
That bereth the rede hepe.[14]

And so bifel up-on a day,
For sothe, as I yow telle may,
Sir Thopas wolde out ryde;

He worth upon[15] his stede gray,
And in his honde a launcegay,[16]
A long swerd by his syde.

He priketh thurgh a fair forest,
Ther-inne is many a wilde best,
Ye, bothe bukke and hare;
And, as he priketh north and est,
I telle it yow, him hadde almest
Bitid a sory care.

Ther springen herbes grete and smale,
The lycorys and cetewale,[17]
And many a clowe-gilofre;[18]
And notemuge to putte in ale,
Whether it be moyste[19] or stale,
Or for to leye in cofre.

The briddes singe, it is no nay,[20]
The sparhauk and the papejay,
That joye it was to here;
The thrustelcok made eek his lay,
The wodedowve upon the spray
She sang ful loude and clere.

Sir Thopas fil in love-longinge
Al whan he herde the thrustel singe,
And priked[21] as he were wood.[22]
His faire stede in his prikinge
So swatte[23] that men mighte him wringe;
His sydes were al blood.

Sir Thopas eek so wery was
For prikinge on the softe gras,
So fiers was his corage,
That doun he leyde him in that plas
To make his stede som solas,
And yaf him good forage.

'O seinte Marie, *benedicite!*
What eyleth this love at me[24]
To binde me so sore?
Me dremed al this night, pardee,
An elf-queen shal my lemman be,
And slepe under my gore.[25]

An elf-queen wol I love, y-wis,
For in this world no womman is
Worthy to be my make[26]
In toune;

[1] waxed, grew. [2] finest bread.
[3] complexion. [4] well-dyed.
[5] reached. [6] Spanish leather.
[7] From Bruges. [8] scarlet or any rich fabric.
[9] Genoese coin. [10] knew how.
[11] Simply "hawking." "To go to the river" is to go hawking; "to go to the wood" is to go hunting.
[12] A ram was the usual prize.
[13] better. [14] hips.
[15] mounted. [16] hunting-spear.
[17] the herb zedoary. [18] clove.
[19] musty, new. [20] there 's no denying it.
[21] spurred. [22] mad. [23] sweated.
[24] What has this love against me?
[25] cloak. [26] mate.

Alle othere wommen I forsake,
And to an elf-queen I me take
By dale and eek by doune!'

In-to his sadel he clamb anoon,
And priketh over style and stoon
An elf-queen for t'espye,
Til he so longe had riden and goon
That he fond, in a privee woon,[1]
The contree of Fairye
So wilde;
For in that contree was ther noon
That to him dorste ryde or goon,
Neither wyf ne childe.

Til that ther cam a greet geaunt,
His name was sir Olifaunt,
A perilous man of dede.
He seyde, 'Child, by Termagaunt,
But-if thou prike out of myn haunt,
Anon I slee thy stede
With mace.
Heer is the queen of Fayërye,
With harpe and pype and simphonye[2]
Dwelling in this place.'

The child seyde, 'Al-so mote I thee,[3]
Tomorwe wol I mete thee
Whan I have myn armoure;
And yet I hope, *par ma fay*,
That thou shalt with this launcegay
Abyen it ful soure;[4]
Thy mawe
Shal I percen, if I may,
Er it be fully pryme of day,
For heer thou shalt be slawe.'

Sir Thopas drow abak ful faste;
This geaunt at him stones caste
Out of a fel staf-slinge;
But faire escapeth child Thopas,
And al it was thurgh Goddes gras,
And thurgh his fair beringe.

Yet listeth, lordes, to my tale
Merier than the nightingale,
For now I wol yow roune[5]
How sir Thopas with sydes smale,[6]
Priking over hil and dale,
Is come agayn to toune.

His merie men comanded he
To make him bothe game and glee,
For nedes moste he fighte

[1] retreat. [2] a stringed instrument. [3] prosper.
[4] sourly, i.e. dearly, pay for it. [5] tell. [6] slim waist.

With a geaunt with hevedes[7] three,
For paramour and jolitee
Of oon that shoon ful brighte.

'Do come,' he seyde, 'my minstrales,
And gestours, for to tellen tales
Anon in myn arminge;
Of romances that been royales,
Of popes and of cardinales,
And eek of love-lykinge.'

They fette[8] him first the swete wyn,
And mede eek in a maselyn,[9]
And royal spicerye
Of gingebreed that was ful fyn,
And lycorys, and eek comyn,[10]
With sugre that is so trye.[11]

He dide next his whyte lere[12]
Of clooth of lake[13] fyn and clere
A breech and eek a sherte;
And next his sherte an aketoun,[14]
And over that an habergeoun[15]
For[16] percinge of his herte;

And over that a fyn hauberk,[17]
Was al y-wroght of Jewes werk,
Ful strong it was of plate;
And over that his cote-armour
As whyt as is a lily-flour,
In which he wol debate.[18]

His sheeld was al of gold so reed,
And ther-in was a bores heed,
A charbocle bisyde;
And there he swoor, on ale and breed,
How that the geaunt shal be deed,
Bityde what bityde!

His jambeux[19] were of quirboilly,[20]
His swerdes shethe of yvory,
His helm of laton[21] bright;
His sadel was of rewel-boon,[22]
His brydel as the sonne shoon,
Or as the mone light.

His spere was of fyn ciprees,
That bodeth werre, and no-thing pees,
The heed ful sharpe y-grounde;

[7] heads. [8] fetched. [9] mazer, or maple-bowl.
[10] cummin. [11] delicious. [12] flesh. [13] linen.
[14] padded doublet. [15] coat-of-mail.
[16] against, to prevent.
[17] Hauberk is usually coat-of-mail, but here it is, apparently, plate-armour. Thopas was well protected!
[18] fight. [19] shin-pieces.
[20] hard leather, boiled and moulded.
[21] a composite metal. [22] probably ivory.

His stede was al dappel-gray,
It gooth an ambel in the way
Ful softely and rounde
In londe.
Lo, lordes myne, heer is a fit!
If ye wol any more of it,
To telle it wol I fonde.

[*The Second Fit.*]

Now hold your mouth, *par charitee*,
Bothe knight and lady free,
And herkneth to my spelle;
Of bataille and of chivalry,
And of ladyes love-drury [1]
Anon I wol yow telle.

Men speke of romances of prys,
Of Horn child and of Ypotys,
Of Bevis and sir Gy,
Of sir Libeux and Pleyn-damour;
But sir Thopas, he bereth the flour
Of royal chivalry.

His gode stede al he bistrood,
And forth upon his wey he glood [2]
As sparkle out of the bronde;
Up-on his crest he bar a tour,
And ther-in stiked a lily-flour.
God shilde his cors fro shonde! [3]

And for he was a knight auntrous,[4]
He nolde slepen in non hous,
But liggen in his hode;
His brighte helm was his wonger,[5]
And by him baiteth his dextrer [6]
Of herbes fyne and gode.

Him-self drank water of the wel,
As did the knight sir Percivel,
So worthy under wede,
Til on a day——

Here the Host stinteth Chaucer of his Tale of Thopas.

THE NONNE PREESTES TALE

Here biginneth the Nonne Preestes Tale of the Cok and Hen, Chauntecleer and Pertelote

A POVRE widwe, somdel stope [7] in age,
Was whylom dwelling in a narwe cotage,
Bisyde a grove, stonding in a dale.
This widwe, of which I telle yow my tale,
Sin thilke day that she was last a wyf,
In pacience ladde a ful simple lyf,
For litel was hir catel [8] and hir rente;
By housbondrye [9] of such as God hir sente
She fond [10] hir-self, and eek hir doghtren two.
Three large sowes hadde she, and namo,
Three kyn, and eek a sheep that highte Malle.
Ful sooty was hir bour, and eek hir halle,
In which she eet ful many a sclendre meel.
Of poynaunt sauce hir neded never a deel.
No deyntee morsel passed thurgh hir throte;
Hir dyete was accordant to hir cote.
Repleccioun ne made hir never syk;
Attempree [11] dyete was al her phisyk,
And exercyse, and hertes suffisaunce.
The goute lette hir no-thing [12] for to daunce,
N'apoplexye shente [13] nat hir heed;
No wyn ne drank she, neither whyt ne reed;
Hir bord was served most with whyt and blak,
Milk and broun breed, in which she fond no lak,
Seynd [14] bacoun, and somtyme an ey or tweye,
For she was as it were a maner deye.[15]
A yerd she hadde, enclosed al aboute
With stikkes, and a drye dich with-oute,
In which she hadde a cok, hight Chauntecleer.
In al the land of crowing nas his peer;
His vois was merier than the mery orgon [16]
On messe-dayes that in the chirche gon;
Wel sikerer [17] was his crowing in his logge,
Than is a clokke, or an abbey orlogge.
By nature knew he ech ascencioun
Of equinoxial in thilke toun;
For whan degrees fiftene were ascended,
Thanne crew he that it mighte nat ben amended.
His comb was redder than the fyn coral,
And batailed as it were a castel-wal.
His bile was blak, and as the jeet it shoon;
Lyk asur were his legges, and his toon;
His nayles whytter than the lilie flour,
And lyk the burned gold was his colour.
This gentil cok hadde in his governaunce
Sevene hennes, for to doon al his plesaunce,
Whiche were his sustres and his paramours,
And wonder lyk to him, as of colours.

[1] passion. [2] glided. [3] harm. [4] adventurous, errant. [5] pillow. [6] war-horse. [7] advanced. [8] chattels. [9] economy. [10] provided for. [11] Temperate. [12] hindered her not at all. [13] hurt. [14] Singed. [15] farming or dairy woman. [16] organ pipes (plural). [17] more accurate.

Of whiche the faireste hewed on hir throte
Was cleped faire damoysele Pertelote.
Curteys she was, discreet, and debonaire,
And compaignable, and bar hir-self so faire,
Sin thilke day that she was seven night old,
That trewely she hath the herte in hold
Of Chauntecleer loken in every lith;[1]
He loved hir so, that wel was him therwith.
But such a joye was it to here hem singe,
Whan that the brighte sonne gan to springe,
In swete accord, 'My lief is faren in londe.'
For thilke tyme, as I have understonde,
Bestes and briddes coude speke and singe.
And so bifel, that in a daweninge,
As Chauntecleer among his wyves alle
Sat on his perche, that was in the halle,
And next him sat this faire Pertelote,
This Chauntecleer gan gronen in his throte,
As man that in his dreem is drecched[2] sore.
And whan that Pertelote thus herde him rore,
She was agast, and seyde, 'O herte dere,
What eyleth yow, to grone in this manere?
Ye been a verray sleper, fy for shame!'
And he answerde and seyde thus, 'Madame,
I pray yow, that ye take it nat a-grief:
By God, me mette[3] I was in swich meschief
Right now, that yet myn herte is sore afright.
Now God,' quod he, 'my swevene recche[4] aright.
And keep my body out of foul prisoun!
Me mette, how that I romed up and doun
Withinne our yerde, wher-as I saugh a beste,
Was lyk an hound, and wolde han maad areste
Upon my body, and wolde han had me deed.
His colour was bitwixe yelwe and reed;
And tipped was his tail, and bothe his eres,
With blak, unlyk the remenant of his heres;
His snowte smal, with glowinge eyen tweye.
Yet of his look for fere almost I deye;
This caused me my groning, doutelees.'
'Avoy!' quod she, 'fy on yow, hertelees!

[1] limb. [2] troubled.
[3] Impersonal verb — "I dreamed."
[4] interpret my dream.

Allas!' quod she, 'for, by that God above,
Now han ye lost myn herte and al my love;
I can not love a coward, by my feith.
For certes, what so any womman seith,
We alle desyren, if it mighte be,
To han housbondes hardy, wyse, and free,
And secree, and no nigard, ne no fool,
Ne him that is agast of every tool,[5]
Ne noon avauntour,[6] by that God above!
How dorste ye seyn for shame unto your love,
That any thing mighte make yow aferd?
Have ye no mannes herte, and han a berd?
Allas! and conne ye been agast of swevenis?
No-thing, God wot, but vanitee, in sweven is.
Swevenes engendren of repleccioums,[7]
And ofte of fume,[8] and of compleccioums[9]
Whan humours been to habundant in a wight.
Certes this dreem, which ye han met tonight,
Cometh of the grete superfluitee
Of youre rede colera,[10] pardee,
Which causeth folk to dreden in here dremes
Of arwes, and of fyr with rede lemes;[11]
Of grete bestes, that they wol hem byte,
Of contek,[12] and of whelpes grete and lyte;
Right as the humour of malencolye
Causeth ful many a man, in sleep, to crye,
For fere of blake beres, or boles blake,
Or elles, blake develes wole hem take.
Of othere humours coude I telle also,
That worken many a man in sleep ful wo;
But I wol passe as lightly as I can.
Lo Catoun,[13] which that was so wys a man,
Seyde he nat thus, "Ne do no fors[14] of dremes"?
Now, sire,' quod she, 'whan we flee fro the bemes,
For Goddes love, as tak som laxatyf;
Up peril of my soule, and of my lyf,
I counseille yow the beste, I wol nat lye,
That bothe of colere and of malencolye

[5] weapon. [6] boaster. [7] repletions.
[8] the vapors from a disordered stomach.
[9] dispositions, mixtures of humors.
[10] red bile. Choler was one of the four "humours," the others being blood, black bile, and phlegm.
[11] flames. [12] strife.
[13] The mediæval Dionysius Cato.
[14] Pay no attention.

Ye purge yow; and for ye shul nat tarie,
Though in this toun is noon apotecarie,
I shal my self to herbes techen yow,
That shul ben for your hele, and for your prow;[1]
And in our yerd tho herbes shal I finde,
The whiche han of hir propretee, by kinde,
To purgen yow binethe, and eek above.
Forget not this, for Goddes owene love!
Ye been ful colerik of complecioun.
Ware the sonne in his ascencioun
Ne fynde yow nat repleet of humours hote;
And if it do, I dar wel leye a grote,
That ye shul have a fevere terciane,
Or an agu, that may be youre bane.
A day or two ye shul have digestyves
Of wormes, er ye take your laxatyves,
Of lauriol,[2] centaure,[3] and fumetere,[4]
Or elles of ellebor, that groweth there,
Of catapuce,[5] or of gaytres[6] beryis,
Of erbe yve,[7] growing in our yerd, that mery is;
Pekke hem up right as they growe, and ete hem in.
Be mery, housbond, for your fader kin!
Dredeth no dreem; I can say yow namore.'
'Madame,' quod he, '*graunt mercy*[8] of your lore.
But nathelees, as touching daun Catoun,
That hath of wisdom such a greet renoun,
Though that he bad no dremes for to drede,
By God, men may in olde bokes rede
Of many a man, more of auctoritee
Than ever Catoun was, so mote I thee,
That al the revers seyn of his sentence,
And han wel founden by experience,
That dremes ben significaciouns,
As wel of joye as tribulaciouns
That folk enduren in this lyf present.
Ther nedeth make of this noon argument;
The verray preve sheweth it in dede.
Oon of the gretteste auctours[9] that men rede
Seith thus, that whylom two felawes wente
On pilgrimage, in a ful good entente;
And happed so, thay come into a toun,
Wher-as ther was swich congregacioun
Of peple, and eek so streit[10] of herbergage
That they ne founde as muche as o cotage
In which they bothe mighte y-logged be.
Wherfor thay mosten, of necessitee,
As for that night, departen compaignye;
And ech of hem goth to his hostelrye,
And took his logging as it wolde falle.
That oon of hem was logged in a stalle,
Fer in a yerd, with oxen of the plough;
That other man was logged wel y-nough,
As was his aventure, or his fortune,
That us governeth alle as in commune.
And so bifel, that, longe er it were day,
This man mette in his bed, ther-as he lay,
How that his felawe gan up-on him calle,
And seyde, "Allas! for in an oxes stalle
This night I shal be mordred ther I lye.
Now help me, dere brother, er I dye;
In alle haste com to me," he sayde.
This man out of his sleep for fere abrayde;[11]
But whan that he was wakned of his sleep,
He turned him, and took of this no keep;
Him thoughte his dreem nas but a vanitee.
Thus twyës in his sleping dremed he.
And atte thridde tyme yet his felawe
Cam, as him thoughte, and seide, "I am now slawe;
Bihold my blody woundes, depe and wyde!
Arys up erly in the morwe-tyde,
And at the west gate of the toun," quod he,
"A carte ful of dong ther shaltow see,
In which my body is hid ful prively;
Do thilke carte aresten boldely.
My gold caused my mordre, sooth to sayn;"
And tolde him every poynt how he was slayn,
With a ful pitous face, pale of hewe.
And truste wel, his dreem he fond ful trewe;
For on the morwe, as sone as it was day,
To his felawes in he took the way;
And whan that he cam to this oxes stalle,
After his felawe he bigan to calle.
The hostiler answered him anon,
And seyde, "Sire, your felawe is agon;
As sone as day he wente out of the toun."
This man gan fallen in suspecioun,
Remembring on his dremes that he mette,
And forth he goth, no lenger wolde he lette,[12]
Unto the west gate of the toun, and fond
A dong-carte, as it were to donge lond,
That was arrayed in the same wyse
As ye han herd the dede man devyse;
And with an hardy herte he gan to crye
Vengeaunce and justice of this felonye:—
"My felawe mordred is this same night,
And in this carte he lyth gapinge upright.

[1] profit. [2] laurel. [3] centaury. [4] fumitory. [5] lesser spurge. [6] dogwood, or possibly buckthorn. [7] ground-pine. [8] many thanks. [9] Perhaps Cicero in *De Divinatione*, I, 27. [10] limited. [11] started. [12] delay.

I crye out on the ministres," quod he,
"That sholden kepe and reulen this citee;
Harrow! allas! her lyth my felawe slayn!"
What sholde I more un-to this tale sayn?
The peple out-sterte, and caste the cart to grounde,
And in the middel of the dong they founde
The dede man, that mordred was al newe.
O blisful God, that art so just and trewe!
Lo, how that thou biwreyest mordre alway!
Mordre wol out, that see we day by day.
Mordre is so wlatsom[1] and abhominable
To God, that is so just and resonable,
That he ne wol nat suffre it heled[2] be;
Though it abyde a yeer, or two, or three,
Mordre wol out, this my conclusioun.
And right anoon, ministres of that toun
Han hent the carter, and so sore him pyned,[3]
And eek the hostiler so sore engyned,[4]
That they biknewe[5] hir wikkednesse anoon,
And were an-hanged by the nekke-boon.
Here may men seen that dremes been to drede.
And certes in the same book I rede,
Right in the nexte chapitre after this,
(I gabbe[6] nat, so have I joye or blis,)
Two men that wolde han passed over see,
For certeyn cause, in-to a fer contree,
If that the wind ne hadde been contrairie,
That made hem in a citee for to tarie,
That stood ful mery upon an haven-syde.
But on a day, ageyn the even-tyde,
The wind gan chaunge, and blew right as hem leste.
Jolif and glad they wente un-to hir reste,
And casten hem[7] ful erly for to saille;
But to that oo man fil a greet mervaille.
That oon of hem, in sleping as he lay,
Him mette a wonder dreem, agayn the day;
Him thoughte a man stood by his beddes syde,
And him comaunded that he sholde abyde,
And seyde him thus, "If thou to-morwe wende,
Thou shalt be dreynt;[8] my tale is at an ende."
He wook, and tolde his felawe what he mette,
And preyde him his viage for to lette;[9]
As for that day, he preyde him to abyde.
His felawe, that lay by his beddes syde,
Gan for to laughe, and scorned him ful faste.
"No dreem," quod he, "may so myn herte agaste,
That I wol lette for to do my thinges.
I sette not a straw by thy dreminges,
For swevenes been but vanitees and japes.
Men dreme al-day of owles or of apes,
And eek of many a mase[10] therwithal;
Men dreme of thing that never was ne shal.
But sith I see that thou wolt heer abyde,
And thus for-sleuthen[11] wilfully thy tyde,
God wat it reweth me;[12] and have good day."
And thus he took his leve, and wente his way.
But er that he hadde halfe his cours y-seyled,
Noot I nat why, ne what mischaunce it eyled,
But casuelly the shippes botme rente,
And ship and man under the water wente
In sighte of othere shippes it byside,
That with hem seyled at the same tyde.
And therefor, faire Pertelote so dere,
By swiche ensamples olde maistow lere,
That no man sholde been to recchelees
Of dremes, for I sey thee, doutelees,
That many a dreem ful sore is for to drede.
Lo, in the lyf of seint Kenelm, I rede,
That was Kenulphus sone, the noble king
Of Mercenrike,[13] how Kenelm mette a thing;
A lyte er he was mordred, on a day,
His mordre in his avisioun he say.
His norice him expouned every del
His sweven, and bad him for to kepe him wel
For traisoun; but he nas but seven yeer old,
And therfore litel tale hath he told
Of any dreem, so holy was his herte.
By God, I hadde lever than my sherte
That ye had rad his legende, as have I.
Dame Pertelote, I sey yow trewely,
Macrobeus, that writ th'avisioun
In Affrike of the worthy Cipioun,[14]
Affermeth dremes, and seith that they been
Warning of thinges that men after seen.
And forther-more, I pray yow loketh wel
In the olde testament, of Daniel,
If he held dremes any vanitee.
Reed eek of Joseph, and ther shul ye see

[1] disgusting. [2] concealed. [3] tortured. [4] racked. [5] confessed. [6] lie. [7] planned. [8] drowned. [9] delay.
[10] astounding thing. [11] idle away. [12] I lament. [13] Mercia, in central England.
[14] Macrobius's commentary on Cicero's *Dream of Scipio*.

Wher dremes ben somtyme (I sey nat alle)
Warning of thinges that shul after falle.
Loke of Egipt the king, daun[1] Pharao,
His bakere and his boteler also,
Wher they ne felte noon effect in dremes.
Who-so wol seken actes of sondry remes[2]
May rede of dremes many a wonder thing.
Lo Cresus, which that was of Lyde king,
Mette he nat that he sat upon a tree,
Which signified he sholde anhanged be? 320
Lo heer Andromacha, Ectores wyf,
That day that Ector sholde lese his lyf,
She dremed on the same night biforn,
How that the lyf of Ector sholde be lorn
If thilke day he wente in-to bataille;
She warned him, but it mighte nat availle;
He wente for to fighte nathelees,
But he was slayn anoon of Achilles.
But thilke tale is al to long to telle,
And eek it is ny day, I may nat dwelle. 330
Shortly I seye, as for conclusioun,
That I shal han of this avisioun
Adversitee; and I seye forther-more,
That I ne telle of laxatyves no store,[3]
For they ben venimous, I woot it wel;
I hem defye, I love hem never a del.
Now let us speke of mirthe, and stinte al this.
Madame Pertelote, so have I blis,
Of o thing God hath sent me large grace;
For whan I see the beautee of your face, 340
Ye ben so scarlet-reed about your yën,
It maketh al my drede for to dyen;
For, also siker as *In principio*,
Mulier est hominis confusio.
Madame, the sentence of this Latin is —
Womman is mannes joye and al his blis.
For whan I fele a-night your softe syde,
Al-be-it that I may nat on you ryde,
For that our perche is maad so narwe, alas!
I am so ful of joye and of solas 350
That I defye bothe sweven and dreem.'
And with that word he fley doun fro the beem,
For it was day, and eek his hennes alle;
And with a chuk he gan hem for to calle,
For he had founde a corn, lay in the yerd.
Royal he was, he was namore aferd;
He fethered Pertelote twenty tyme,
And trad as ofte, er that it was pryme.
He loketh as it were a grim leoun;
And on his toos he rometh up and doun, 360
Him deyned not to sette his foot to grounde.
He chukketh, whan he hath a corn y-founde,
And to him rennen thanne his wyves alle.
Thus royal, as a prince is in his halle,
Leve I this Chauntecleer in his pasture;
And after wol I telle his aventure.
Whan that the month in which the world bigan,
That highte March, whan God first maked man,[4]
Was complet, and [y]-passed were also,
Sin March bigan, thritty dayes and two, 370
Bifel that Chauntecleer, in al his pryde,
His seven wyves walking by his syde,
Caste up his eyen to the brighte sonne,
That in the signe of Taurus hadde y-ronne
Twenty degrees and oon, and somwhat more;
And knew by kynde,[5] and by noon other lore,
That it was pryme,[6] and crew with blisful stevene.
'The sonne,' he sayde, 'is clomben up on hevene
Fourty degrees and oon, and more, y-wis.
Madame Pertelote, my worldes blis, 380
Herkneth thise blisful briddes how they singe,
And see the fresshe floures how they springe;
Ful is myn herte of revel and solas.'
But sodeinly him fil a sorweful cas;
For ever the latter ende of joye is wo.
God woot that worldly joye is sone ago;
And if a rethor[7] coude faire endyte,
He in a cronique saufly mighte it wryte,
As for a sovereyn notabilitee.
Now every wys man, lat him herkne me; 390
This storie is al-so trewe, I undertake,
As is the book of Launcelot de Lake,[8]
That wommen holde in ful gret reverence.
Now will I torne agayn to my sentence.
A col-fox,[9] ful of sly iniquitee,
That in the grove hadde woned yeres three,
By heigh imaginacioun forn-cast,
The same night thurgh-out the hegges brast[10]
Into the yerd, ther Chauntecleer the faire
Was wont, and eek his wyves, to repaire;
And in a bed of wortes[11] stille he lay, 401
Til it was passed undern[12] of the day,
Wayting his tyme on Chauntecleer to falle,
As gladly doon thise homicydes alle,

[1] lord, *dominus*. [2] realms. [3] set no store by.
[4] So they called March the first month of the year.
[5] nature. [6] nine A.M. [7] a master of eloquence.
[8] A long-winded prose romance, of which Malory made much use.
[9] black or black-tipped fox. [10] burst.
[11] vegetables. [12] middle of the morning.

That in awayt liggen to mordre men.
O false mordrer, lurking in thy den!
O newe Scariot,[1] newe Genilon![2]
False dissimilour, O Greek Sinon,
That broghtest Troye al outrely[3] to sorwe!
O Chauntecleer, acursed be that morwe,
That thou into that yerd flough fro the bemes!
Thou were ful wel y-warned by thy dremes,
That thilke day was perilous to thee.
But what that God forwoot mot nedes be,
After the opinioun of certeyn clerkis.
Witnesse on him, that any perfit clerk is,
That in scole is gret altercacioun
In this matere, and greet disputisoun,
And hath ben of an hundred thousand men.
But I ne can not bulte it to the bren,[4]
As can the holy doctour Augustyn,
Or Boëce,[5] or the bishop Bradwardyn,[6]
Whether that Goddes worthy forwiting
Streyneth[7] me nedely for to doon a thing,
(Nedely clepe I simple necessitee);
Or elles, if free choys be graunted me
To do that same thing, or do it noght,
Though God forwoot it, er that it was wroght;
Or if his witing streyneth nevere a del
But by necessitee condicionel.
I wol not han to do of swich matere;
My tale is of a cok, as ye may here,
That took his counseil of his wyf, with sorwe,
To walken in the yerd upon that morwe
That he had met the dreem, that I yow tolde.
Wommennes counseils been ful ofte colde;[8]
Wommannes counseil broghte us first to wo,
And made Adam fro paradys to go,
Ther-as he was ful mery, and wel at ese. —
But for I noot to whom it mighte displese
If I counseil of wommen wolde blame,
Passe over, for I seyde it in my game.
Rede auctours, wher they trete of swich matere,
And what thay seyn of wommen ye may here.
Thise been the cokkes wordes, and nat myne;
I can noon harm of no womman divyne. —
Faire in the sond, to bathe hir merily,
Lyth Pertelote, and alle hir sustres by,

[1] Judas Iscariot. [2] Roland's betrayer. [3] entirely.
[4] sift it thoroughly. [5] Boethius.
[6] English theologian, d. 1349.
[7] constraineth. [8] disastrous, — a proverb.

Agayn the sonne; and Chauntecleer so free
Song merier than the mermayde in the see;
For Phisiologus[9] seith sikerly,
How that they singen wel and merily.
And so bifel that, as he caste his yë,
Among the wortes, on a boterflye,
He was war of this fox that lay ful lowe.
No-thing ne liste him thanne for to crowe,
But cryde anon, 'cok, cok,' and up he sterte,
As man that was affrayed in his herte.
For naturelly a beest desyreth flee
Fro his contrarie, if he may it see,
Though he never erst had seyn it with his yë.
This Chauntecleer, whan he gan him espye,
He wolde han fled, but that the fox anon
Seyde, 'Gentil sire, allas! wher wol ye gon?
Be ye affrayed of me that am your freend?
Now certes, I were worse than a feend,
If I to yow wolde harm or vileinye.
I am nat come your counseil for t'espye;
But trewely, the cause of my cominge
Was only for to herkne how that ye singe.
For trewely ye have as mery a stevene
As eny aungel hath, that is in hevene;
Therwith ye han in musik more felinge
Than hadde Boëce, or any that can singe.
My lord your fader (God his soule blesse!)
And eek your moder, of hir gentilesse,
Han in myn hous y-been, to my gret ese;
And certes, sire, ful fayn wolde I yow plese.
But for men speke of singing, I wol saye,
So mote I brouke[10] wel myn eyen tweye,
Save yow, I herde never man so singe,
As dide your fader in the morweninge;
Certe, it was of herte, al that he song.
And for to make his voys the more strong,
He wolde so peyne him, that with bothe his yën
He moste winke, so loude he wolde cryen,
And stonden on his tiptoon there-with-al,
And strecche forth his nekke long and smal.
And eek he was of swich discrecioun,
That ther nas no man in no regioun
That him in song or wisdom mighte passe.
I have wel rad in daun Burnel the Asse,[11]
Among his vers, how that ther was a cok,
For that a preestes sone yaf him a knok

[9] The mediæval "Bestiary," a collection of moralized descriptions of beasts.
[10] Our "brook" vb., here "use" or "enjoy."
[11] Nigellus Wireker's "Burnellus" or "Speculum Stultorum" (Mirror of Fools), Anglo-Latin satirical poem written about 1190.

Upon his leg, whyl he was yong and nyce,[1]
He made him for to lese his benefyce.
But certeyn, ther nis no comparisoun
Bitwix the wisdom and discrecioun
Of youre fader, and of his subtiltee.
Now singeth, sire, for seinte Charitee,
Let see, conne ye your fader countrefete?'[2]
This Chauntecleer his winges gan to bete,
As man that coude his tresoun nat espye,
So was he ravisshed with his flaterye.
Allas! ye lordes, many a fals flatour
Is in your courtes, and many a losengeour,[3]
That plesen yow wel more, by my feith,
Than he that soothfastnesse unto yow seith.
Redeth Ecclesiaste[4] of flaterye;
Beth war, ye lordes, of hir trecherye.
This Chauntecleer stood hye up-on his toos,
Strecching his nekke, and heeld his eyen cloos,
And gan to crowe loude for the nones;[5]
And daun Russel the fox sterte up at ones,
And by the gargat[6] hente Chauntecleer,
And on his bak toward the wode him beer,
For yet ne was ther no man that him sewed.[7]
O destinee, that mayst nat been eschewed!
Allas, that Chauntecleer fleigh fro the bemes!
Allas, his wyf ne roghte nat of dremes!
And on a Friday fil al this meschaunce.
O Venus, that art goddesse of plesaunce,
Sin that thy servant was this Chauntecleer,
And in thy service dide al his poweer,
More for delyt, than world to multiplye,
Why woldestow suffre him on thy day to dye?
O Gaufred,[8] dere mayster soverayn,
That, whan thy worthy king Richard was slayn
With shot,[9] compleynedest his deth so sore,
Why ne hadde I now thy sentence and thy lore,
The Friday for to chyde, as diden ye?
(For on a Friday soothly slayn was he.)
Than wolde I shewe yow how that I coude pleyne
For Chauntecleres drede, and for his peyne.
Certes, swich cry ne lamentacioun
Was never of ladies maad, whan Ilioun
Was wonne, and Pirrus with his streite swerd,
Whan he hadde hent[10] king Priam by the berd,
And slayn him (as saith us *Eneydos*),[11]
As maden alle the hennes in the clos,
Whan they had seyn of Chauntecleer the sighte.
But sovereynly dame Pertelote shrighte,
Ful louder than dide Hasdrubales[12] wyf,
Whan that hir housbond hadde lost his lyf,
And that the Romayns hadde brend Cartage;
She was so ful of torment and of rage,
That wilfully into the fyr she sterte,
And brende hir-selven with a stedfast herte.
O woful hennes, right so cryden ye,
As, whan that Nero brende the citee
Of Rome, cryden senatoures wyves,
For that hir housbondes losten alle hir lyves;
Withouten gilt this Nero hath hem slayn.
Now wol I torne to my tale agayn.
This sely[13] widwe, and eek hir doghtres two,
Herden thise hennes crye and maken wo,
And out at dores sterten they anoon,
And syen the fox toward the grove goon,
And bar upon his bak the cok away;
And cryden, 'Out! harrow! and weylaway!
Ha, ha, the fox!' and after him they ran,
And eek with staves many another man;
Ran Colle our dogge, and Talbot, and Gerland,
And Malkin, with a distaf in hir hand;
Ran cow and calf, and eek the verray hogges,
So were they fered for berking of the dogges
And shouting of the men and wimmen eke;
They ronne so, hem thoughte hir herte breke.
They yelleden as feendes doon in helle;
The dokes cryden as men wolde hem quelle;[14]
The gees for fere flowen over the trees;
Out of the hyve cam the swarm of bees;
So hidous was the noyse, a! *benedicite!*
Certes, he Jakke Straw,[15] and his meynee,

[1] foolish. [2] imitate. [3] flatterer.
[4] Perhaps *Ecclesiasticus* xii, 10 f. in the *Apocrypha*.
[5] "For the nonce," a meaningless phrase.
[6] gorge, throat. [7] pursued.
[8] Geoffrey de Vinsauf (fl. 1200) who wrote the *Nova Poetria* to show what good verse should be. It contains an overdone lament for Richard I.
[9] He was deeply wounded near the nape of the neck by an arrow.
[10] seized. [11] *Æneid*, II, 544.
[12] King of Carthage, who slew himself when the Romans captured it in 146 B. C.
[13] helpless. [14] kill.
[15] Leader of the London insurrection of 1381. He slew many Flemings.

Ne made never shoutes half so shrille,
Whan that they wolden any Fleming kille,
As thilke day was maad upon the fox.
Of bras thay broghten bemes,[1] and of box,
Of horn, of boon, in whiche they blewe and pouped,
And therewithal thay shryked and they houped;
It semed as that heven sholde falle.
Now, gode men, I pray yow herkneth alle!
Lo, how fortune turneth sodeinly
The hope and pryde eek of hir enemy!
This cok, that lay upon the foxes bak,
In al his drede, un-to the fox he spak,
And seyde, 'Sire, if that I were as ye,
Yet sholde I seyn (as wis[2] God helpe me),
"Turneth agayn, ye proude cherles alle!
A verray pestilence up-on yow falle!
Now am I come un-to this wodes syde,
Maugree[3] your heed, the cok shal heer abyde;
I wol him ete in feith, and that anon."'—
The fox answerde, 'In feith, it shall be don,'—
And as he spak that word, al sodeinly
This cok brak from his mouth deliverly,[4]
And heighe up-on a tree he fleigh anon.
And whan the fox saugh that he was y-gon,
'Allas!' quod he, 'O Chauntecleer, allas!
I have to yow,' quod he, 'y-doon trespas,
In-as-muche as I maked yow aferd,
Whan I yow hente, and broghte out of the yerd;
But, sire, I dide it in no wikke entente;
Com doun, and I shal telle yow what I mente.
I shal seye sooth to yow, God help me so.'
'Nay than,' quod he, 'I shrewe[5] us bothe two,
And first I shrewe my-self, bothe blood and bones,
If thou bigyle me ofter than ones.
Thou shalt na-more, thurgh thy flaterye,
Do me to singe and winke with myn yë.
For he that winketh, whan he sholde see,
Al wilfully, God lat him never thee!'[6]
'Nay,' quod the fox, 'but God yeve him meschaunce,
That is so undiscreet of governaunce,
That jangleth whan he sholde holde his pees.'
Lo, swich it is for to be recchelees,
And necligent, and truste on flaterye.
But ye that holden this tale a folye,
As of a fox, or of a cok and hen,
Taketh the moralitee, good men.
For seint Paul seith, that al that writen is,
To our doctryne it is y-write, y-wis.[7]
Taketh the fruyt, and let the chaf be stille.
Now, gode God, if that it be thy wille,
As seith my lord, so make us alle good men;
And bringe us to his heighe blisse. Amen.

Here is ended the Nonne Preestes Tale.

THE PROLOGUE OF THE PARDONERS TALE

Here folweth the Prologe of the Pardoners Tale

Radix malorum est Cupiditas: Ad Thimotheum, sexto.

'LORDINGS,' quod he, 'in chirches whan I preche,
I peyne me to han an hauteyn speche,[8]
And ringe it out as round as gooth a belle,
For I can al by rote[9] that I telle.
My theme is alwey oon, and ever was—
"*Radix malorum est Cupiditas.*"[10]
First I pronounce whennes that I come,
And than my bulles shewe I, alle and somme.
Our lige lordes seel on my patente,[11]
That shewe I first, my body to warente,
That no man be so bold, ne preest ne clerk,
Me to destourbe of Cristes holy werk;
And after that than telle I forth my tales,
Bulles of popes and of cardinales,
Of patriarkes, and bishoppes I shewe;
And in Latyn I speke a wordes fewe,
To saffron with my predicacioun,[12]
And for to stire men to devocioun.
Than shewe I forth my longe cristal stones,
Y-crammed ful of cloutes and of bones;
Reliks been they, as wenen they echoon.
Than have I in latoun[13] a sholder-boon
Which that was of an holy Jewes shepe.[14]
"Good men," seye I, "tak of my wordes kepe;[15]
If that this boon be wasshe in any welle,
If cow, or calf, or sheep, or oxe swelle
That any worm hath ete, or worm y-stonge,[16]
Tak water of that welle, and wash his tonge,

[1] trumpets. [2] surely. [3] In spite of.
[4] deftly. [5] curse. [6] flourish.

[7] *2 Timothy*, iii, 16.
[8] I take pains to preach in a lofty vein.
[9] know by heart. [10] *1 Timothy*, vi, 10.
[11] warrant, privilege.
[12] To colour, make more impressive, my preaching. Saffron was a beloved spice and garnish.
[13] latten, a mixed metal resembling brass.
[14] Jacob's? [15] heed.
[16] If it has eaten a snake, or if a snake has stung it.

And it is hool anon; and forthermore,
Of pokkes and of scabbe, and every sore
Shal every sheep be hool, that of this welle
Drinketh a draughte; tak kepe eek what I telle.
If that the good-man, that the bestes oweth,[1]
Wol every wike,[2] er that the cok him croweth,
Fastinge, drinken of this welle a draughte,
As thilke holy Jewe our eldres taughte,
His bestes and his stoor shal multiplye.
And, sirs, also it heleth jalousye;
For, though a man be falle in jalous rage,
Let maken with this water his potage,
And never shal he more his wyf mistriste,
Though he the sooth of hir defaute wiste;
Al had she taken preestes two or three.
Heer is a miteyn eek, that ye may see.
He that his hond wol putte in this miteyn,
He shal have multiplying of his greyn,
Whan he hath sowen, be it whete or otes,
So that he offre pens, or elles grotes.
Good men and wommen, o thing warne I yow,
If any wight be in this chirche now,
That hath doon sinne horrible, that he
Dar nat, for shame, of it y-shriven be,
Or any womman, be she yong or old,
That hath y-maad hir housbond cokewold,
Swich folk shul have no power ne no grace
To offren to my reliks in this place.
And who-so findeth him out of swich blame,
He wol com up and offre in Goddes name,
And I assoille him by the auctoritee
Which that by bulle y-graunted was to me."
By this gaude[3] have I wonne, yeer by yeer,
An hundred mark sith I was Pardoner.
I stonde lyk a clerk in my pulpet,
And whan the lewed peple is doun y-set,
I preche, so as ye han herd bifore,
And telle an hundred false japes more.
Than peyne I me to strecche forth the nekke,
And est and west upon the peple I bekke,[4]
As doth a dowve sitting on a berne.
Myn hondes and my tonge goon so yerne,[5]
That it is joye to see my bisinesse.
Of avaryce and of swich cursednesse
Is al my preching, for to make hem free
To yeve her pens, and namely[6] un-to me.

For my entente is nat but for to winne,
And no-thing for correccioun of sinne.
I rekke never, whan that they ben beried,
Though that her soules goon a-blakeberied![7]
For certes, many a predicacioun
Comth ofte tyme of yvel entencioun;
Som for plesaunce of folk and flaterye,
To been avaunced by ipocrisye,
And som for veyne glorie, and som for hate.
For, whan I dar non other weyes debate,
Than wol I stinge him with my tonge smerte
In preching, so that he shal nat asterte
To been defamed falsly, if that he
Hath trespased to my brethren or to me.
For, though I telle noght his propre name,
Men shal wel knowe that it is the same
By signes and by othere circumstances.
Thus quyte I folk that doon us displesances;
Thus spitte I out my venim under hewe
Of holynesse, to seme holy and trewe.
But shortly myn entente I wol devyse;
I preche of no-thing but for coveityse.
Therfor my theme is yet, and ever was —
"*Radix malorum est cupiditas.*"
Thus can I preche agayn that same vyce
Which that I use, and that is avaryce.
But, though my-self be gilty in that sinne,
Yet can I maken other folk to twinne[8]
From avaryce, and sore to repente.
But that is nat my principal entente.
I preche no-thing but for coveityse;
Of this matere it oughte y-nogh suffyse.
Than telle I hem ensamples many oon
Of olde stories, longe tyme agoon:
For lewed peple loven tales olde;
Swich thinges can they wel reporte and holde.
What? trowe ye, the whyles I may preche,
And winne gold and silver for I teche,
That I wol live in povert wilfully?
Nay, nay, I thoghte it never trewely!
For I wol preche and begge in sondry londes;
I wol not do no labour with myn hondes,
Ne make baskettes, and live therby,
Because I wol nat beggen ydelly.
I wol non of the apostles counterfete;
I wol have money, wolle, chese, and whete,
Al[9] were it yeven of the povrest page,
Or of the povrest widwe in a village,
Al sholde hir children sterve for famyne.
Nay! I wol drinke licour of the vyne,

[1] "Own" and "owe" are the same word.
[2] apparently "week."
[3] trifle. [4] nod. [5] actively. [6] especially.
[7] a-blackberrying. [8] separate. [9] Although.

And have a joly wenche in every toun.
But herkneth, lordings, in conclusioun;
Your lyking is that I shal telle a tale.
Now, have I dronke a draughte of corny ale,
By God, I hope I shal yow telle a thing
That shal, by resoun, been at your lyking.
For, though myself be a ful vicious man,
A moral tale yet I yow telle can,
Which I am wont to preche, for to winne.
Now holde your pees, my tale I wol beginne.'

THE PARDONERS TALE

Here biginneth the Pardoners Tale

In Flaundres whylom was a companye
Of yonge folk, that haunteden [1] folye,
As ryot, hasard, stewes,[2] and tavernes,
Wher-as, with harpes, lutes, and giternes,[3]
They daunce and pleye at dees bothe day and night,
And ete also and drinken over hir might,
Thurgh which they doon the devel sacrifyse
With-in that develes temple, in cursed wyse,
By superfluitee abhominable;
Hir othes been so grete and so dampnable,
That it is grisly for to here hem swere;
Our blissed lordes body they to-tere;[4]
Hem thoughte Jewes rente him noght y-nough;
And ech of hem at otheres sinne lough.[5]
And right anon than comen tombesteres [6]
Fetys [7] and smale, and yonge fruytesteres,[8]
Singers with harpes, baudes, wafereres,[9]
Whiche been the verray develes officeres
To kindle and blowe the fyr of lecherye,
That is annexed un-to glotonye;
The holy writ take I to my witnesse,
That luxurie is in wyn and dronkenesse.
Lo, how that dronken Loth, unkindely,[10]
Lay by his doghtres two, unwitingly;
So dronke he was he niste what he wroghte.
Herodes, (who-so wel the stories soghte),
Whan he of wyn was replet at his feste,
Right at his owene table he yaf his heste[11]
To sleen the Baptist John ful giltelees.
Senek seith eek a good word doutelees;
He seith, he can no difference finde
Bitwix a man that is out of his minde
And a man which that is dronkelewe,[12]
But that woodnesse, y-fallen in a shrewe,[13]
Persevereth lenger than doth dronkenesse.
O glotonye, ful of cursednesse,
O cause first of our confusioun,
O original of our dampnacioun,
Til Crist had boght us with his blood agayn!
Lo, how dere, shortly for to sayn,
Aboght was thilke cursed vileinye;
Corrupt was al this world for glotonye!
Adam our fader, and his wyf also,
Fro Paradys to labour and to wo
Were driven for that vyce, it is no drede;[14]
For whyl that Adam fasted, as I rede,
He was in Paradys; and whan that he
Eet of the fruyt defended [15] on the tree,
Anon [16] he was out-cast to wo and peyne.
O glotonye, on thee wel oghte us pleyne!
O, wiste a man how many maladyes
Folwen of excesse and of glotonyes,
He wolde been the more mesurable
Of his diete, sittinge at his table.
Allas! the shorte throte, the tendre mouth,
Maketh that, Est and West, and North and South,
In erthe, in eir, in water men to-swinke [17]
To gete a glotoun deyntee mete and drinke!
Of this matere, o Paul, wel canstow trete,
'Mete un-to wombe, and wombe eek un-to mete,
Shal God destroyen bothe,' as Paulus seith.[18]
Allas! a foul thing is it, by my feith,
To seye this word, and fouler is the dede,
Whan man so drinketh of the whyte and rede,[19]
That of his throte he maketh his privee,
Thurgh thilke cursed superfluitee.
The apostel weping seith ful pitously,
'Ther walken many of whiche yow told have I,
I seye it now weping with pitous voys,
That they been enemys of Cristes croys,
Of whiche the ende is deeth, wombe is her god.' [20]
O wombe! O bely! O stinking cod,[21]
Fulfild of donge and of corrupcioun!
At either ende of thee foul is the soun.

1 followed. 2 brothels. 3 citherns, mandolins.
4 The church taught that Christ was pained again in whatever part of his body a profane person swore by.
5 laughed. 6 tumbling girls.
7 well formed. 8 girls who sold fruit.
9 venders of wafers, i.e. waffles.
10 against nature. 11 gave the order.
12 drunken. The termination is Scandinavian.
13 madness, happening to a person of evil nature.
14 beyond doubt. 15 forbidden. 16 Instantly.
17 labour overmuch. 18 *1 Corinthians*, vi, 13.
19 wines. 20 *Philippians*, iii, 19. 21 bag.

How greet labour and cost is thee to finde![1]
Thise cokes, how they stampe, and streyne, and grinde,
And turnen substaunce in-to accident,[2]
To fulfille al thy likerous talent[3]!
Out of the harde bones knokke they
The mary,[4] for they caste noght a-wey
That may go thurgh the golet softe and swote;
Of spicerye, of leef, and bark, and rote
Shal been his sauce y-maked by delyt,
To make him yet a newer appetyt.
But certes, he that haunteth swich delyces
Is deed, whyl that he liveth in tho vyces.
A lecherous thing is wyn; and dronkenesse
Is ful of stryving and of wrecchednesse.
O dronke man, disfigured is thy face,
Sour is thy breeth, foul artow to embrace,
And thurgh thy dronke nose semeth the soun
As though thou seydest ay, 'Sampsoun, Sampsoun';
And yet, God wot, Sampsoun drank never no wyn.
Thou fallest, as it were a stiked swyn;
Thy tonge is lost, and al thyn honest cure;[5]
For dronkenesse is verray sepulture
Of mannes wit and his discrecioun.
In whom that drinke hath dominacioun,
He can no conseil kepe, it is no drede.
Now kepe yow fro the whyte and fro the rede,
And namely fro the whyte wyn of Lepe,[6]
That is to selle in Fish-strete or in Chepe.[7]
This wyn of Spayne crepeth subtilly
In othere wynes, growing faste by,[8]
Of which ther ryseth swich fumositee,[9]
That whan a man hath dronken draughtes three,
And weneth that he be at hoom in Chepe,
He is in Spayne, right at the toune of Lepe,
Nat at the Rochel, ne at Burdeux toun;[10]
And thanne wol he seye, 'Sampsoun, Sampsoun.'
But herkneth, lordings, o word, I yow preye,
That alle the sovereyn actes, dar I seye,
Of victories in th'olde testament,
Thurgh verray God, that is omnipotent,
Were doon in abstinence and in preyere;
Loketh the Bible, and ther ye may it lere.
Loke, Attila, the grete conquerour,
Deyde in his sleep, with shame and dishonour,
Bledinge ay at his nose in dronkenesse;
A capitayn shoulde live in sobrenesse.
And over all this, avyseth yow right wel
What was comaunded un-to Lamuel—[11]
Nat Samuel, but Lamuel, seye I—
Redeth the Bible, and finde it expresly
Of wyn-yeving to hem that han justyse.
Na-more of this, for it may wel suffyse.
And now that I have spoke of glotonye,
Now wol I yow defenden[12] hasardrye.
Hasard is verray moder of lesinges,
And of deceite, and cursed forsweringes,
Blaspheme of Crist, manslaughtre, and wast also
Of catel[13] and of tyme; and forthermo,
It is repreve[14] and contrarie of honour,
For to ben holde a commune hasardour.
And ever the hyër he is of estaat,
The more is he holden desolaat.
If that a prince useth hasardrye,
In alle governaunce and policye
He is, as by commune opinioun,
Y-holde the lasse in reputacioun.
Stilbon,[15] that was a wys embassadour,
Was sent to Corinthe, in ful greet honour,
Fro Lacidomie, to make hir alliaunce.
And whan he cam, him happede, par chaunce,
That alle the grettest that were of that lond,
Pleyinge atte hasard he hem fond.
For which, as sone as it mighte be,
He stal him hoom agayn to his contree,
And seyde, 'Ther wol I nat lese my name;
Ne I wol nat tak on me so greet defame,
Yow for to allye un-to none hasardours.
Sendeth othere wyse embassadours.
For, by my trouthe, me were lever dye,
Than I yow sholde to hasardours allye.
For ye that been so glorious in honours
Shul nat allyen yow with hasardours
As by my wil, ne as by my tretee.'
This wyse philosophre thus seyde he.

[1] to provide for.
[2] A scholastic distinction: the cooks change the very nature of the food.
[3] gourmandizing appetite.
[4] marrow.
[5] decent personal care.
[6] Near Cadiz; the wine is perhaps natural sherry.
[7] Cheapside, London.
[8] A sly allusion to the adulterating and fortifying of wines.
[9] drunken fumes.
[10] The wines of La Rochelle and Bordeaux were milder.
[11] Lemuel, v. *Proverbs*, xxxi, 4.
[12] forbid.
[13] chattels, property.
[14] reproach.
[15] Apparently for Chilon. The story is in John of Salisbury's *Policraticus*, book I, chap. 5.

Loke eek that, to the king Demetrius
The king of Parthes, as the book seith us,[1]
Sente him a paire of dees of gold in scorn,
For he hadde used hasard ther-biforn;
For which he heeld his glorie or his renoun
At no value or reputacioun.
Lordes may finden other maner pley
Honeste y-nough to dryve the day awey.

Now wol I speke of othes false and grete
A word or two, as olde bokes trete.
Gret swering is a thing abhominable,
And false swering is yet more reprevable.
The heighe God forbad swering at al,
Witnesse on Mathew;[2] but in special
Of swering seith the holy Jeremye,[3]
'Thou shalt seye sooth thyn othes, and nat lye,
And swere in dome, and eek in rightwisnesse;'
But ydel swering is a cursednesse.
Bihold and see, that in the firste table[4]
Of heighe Goddes hestes honurable,
How that the seconde heste of him is this—
'Tak nat my name in ydel or amis.'
Lo, rather[5] he forbedeth swich swering
Than homicyde or many a cursed thing;
I seye that, as by ordre, thus it stondeth;
This knowen, that his hestes understondeth,
How that the second heste of God is that.
And forther over, I wol thee telle al plat,[6]
That vengeance shal nat parten from his hous,
That of his othes is to outrageous.
'By Goddes precious herte, and by his nayles,
And by the blode of Crist, that it is in Hayles,[7]
Seven is my chaunce, and thyn is cink and treye;[8]
By Goddes armes, if thou falsly pleye,
This dagger shal thurgh-out thyn herte go'—
This fruyt cometh of the bicched[9] bones two,
Forswering, ire, falsnesse, homicyde.
Now, for the love of Crist that for us dyde,
Leveth your othes, bothe grete and smale.
But, sirs, now wol I telle forth my tale.

Thise ryotoures three, of whiche I telle,
Longe erst er pryme rong of any belle,
Were set hem in a taverne for to drinke;
And as they satte, they herde a belle clinke
Biforn a cors, was caried to his grave;
That oon of hem gan callen to his knave,
'Go bet,'[10] quod he, 'and axe redily,
What cors is this that passeth heer forby;
And look that thou reporte his name wel.'

'Sir,' quod this boy, 'it nedeth never-a-del.
It was me told, er ye cam heer, two houres;
He was, pardee, an old felawe of youres;
And sodeynly he was y-slayn to-night,
For-dronke,[11] as he sat on his bench upright;
Ther cam a privee theef, men clepeth Deeth,
That in this contree al the peple sleeth,
And with his spere he smoot his herte a-two,
And wente his wey with-outen wordes mo.
He hath a thousand slayn this pestilence:
And, maister, er ye come in his presence,
Me thinketh that it were necessarie
For to be war of swich an adversarie:
Beth redy for to mete him evermore.
Thus taughte me my dame, I sey na-more.'

'By seinte Marie,' seyde this taverner,
'The child seith sooth, for he hath slayn this yeer,
Henne over a myle, with-in a greet village,
Both man and womman, child and hyne, and page.
I trowe his habitacioun be there;
To been avysed greet wisdom it were,
Er that he dide a man a dishonour.'

'Ye, Goddes armes!' quod this ryotour,
'Is it swich peril with him for to mete?
I shal him seke by wey and eek by strete,
I make avow to Goddes digne bones!
Herkneth, felawes, we three been al ones;
Lat ech of us holde up his hond til other,
And ech of us bicomen otheres brother,

[1] John of Salisbury's *Policraticus*, after the place last cited.
[2] *Matthew*, v. 34. [3] *Jeremiah*, iv, 2.
[4] The commandments were divided into two tables, the first laying down man's duty toward God, the second his duty toward his fellows. The first two commandments were grouped as one, and so our third was the second—as in l. 179.
[5] He forbids it sooner, i.e. earlier among the commandments.
[6] And furthermore I say flatly.
[7] At Ashridge in Gloucestershire. This precious blood in a phial was visible only to the truly penitent.
[8] five and three. These are technical expressions in the game of "hazard."
[9] An uncertain word meaning picked, endented; or accursed; or knuckle (bones).
[10] quickly, literally "better." [11] Dead drunk.

And we wol sleen this false traytour Deeth;
He shal be slayn, which that so many sleeth,
By Goddes dignitee, er it be night.'
Togidres han thise three her trouthes plight,
To live and dyen ech of hem for other,
As though he were his owene y-boren brother.
And up they sterte al dronken, in this rage,
And forth they goon towardes that village,
Of which the taverner had spoke biforn,
And many a grisly ooth than han they sworn,
And Cristes blessed body they to-rente —
Deeth shal be deed, if that they may him hente.
Whan they han goon nat fully half a myle,
Right as they wolde han troden over a style,
An old man and a povre with hem mette.
This olde man ful mekely hem grette,[1]
And seyde thus, 'Now, lordes, God yow see!'[2]
The proudest of thise ryotoures three
Answerde agayn, 'What? carl, with sory grace,[3]
Why artow al forwrapped[4] save thy face?
Why livestow so longe in so greet age?'
This olde man gan loke in his visage,
And seyde thus, 'For I ne can nat finde
A man, though that I walked in-to Inde,
Neither in citee nor in no village,
That wolde chaunge his youthe for myn age;
And therfore moot I han myn age stille,
As longe time as it is Goddes wille.
Ne deeth, allas! ne wol nat han my lyf;
Thus walke I, lyk a restelees caityf,
And on the ground, which is my modres gate,
I knokke with my staf, bothe erly and late,
And seye, "Leve moder, leet me in!
Lo, how I vanish, flesh, and blood, and skin!
Allas! whan shul my bones been at reste?
Moder, with yow wolde I chaunge my cheste,
That in my chambre longe tyme hath be,
Ye! for an heyre clout to wrappe me!"[5]
But yet to me she wol nat do that grace,
For which ful pale and welked[6] is my face.

But, sirs, to yow it is no curteisye
To speken to an old man vileinye,
But he trespasse in worde, or elles in dede.
In holy writ ye may your-self wel rede,
"Agayns[7] an old man, hoor upon his heed,
Ye sholde aryse;"[8] wherfor I yeve yow reed,
Ne dooth un-to an old man noon harm now,
Na-more than ye wolde men dide to yow
In age, if that ye so longe abyde;
And God be with yow, wher ye go[9] or ryde.
I moot go thider as I have to go.'
'Nay, olde cherl, by God, thou shalt nat so,'
Seyde this other hasardour anon;
'Thou partest nat so lightly, by seint John!
Thou spak right now of thilke traitour Deeth,
That in this contree alle our frendes sleeth.
Have heer my trouthe, as thou art his aspye,[10]
Tel wher he is, or thou shalt it abye,[11]
By God, and by the holy sacrament!
For soothly thou art oon of his assent,
To sleen us yonge folk, thou false theef!'
'Now, sirs,' quod he, 'if that yow be so leef
To finde Deeth, turne up this croked wey,
For in that grove I lafte him, by my fey,
Under a tree and ther he wol abyde;
Nat for your boost he wol him no-thing hyde.
See ye that ook? Right ther ye shul him finde,
God save yow, that boghte agayn mankinde,
And yow amende!' — thus seyde this olde man.
And everich of thise ryotoures ran,
Til he cam to that tree, and ther they founde
Of florins fyne of golde y-coyned rounde
Wel ny an eighte busshels, as hem thoughte.
No lenger thanne after Deeth they soughte,
But ech of hem so glad was of that sighte,
For that the florins been so faire and brighte,
That doun they sette hem by this precious hord.
The worste of hem he spake the firste word.
'Brethren,' quod he, 'tak kepe what I seye;
My wit is greet, though that I bourde[12] and pleye.

[1] greeted. [2] save. [3] confound you.
[4] concealed with wrappings.
[5] I would change all the treasure that is in the chest at the foot of my bed for a haircloth (shroud).
[6] withered.
[7] When you meet. [8] *Leviticus*, xix, 32.
[9] walk. [10] spy. [11] pay for. [12] joke.

This tresor hath fortune un-to us yiven,
In mirthe and jolitee our lyf to liven;
And lightly as it comth, so wol we spende.
Ey! Goddes precious dignitee! who wende
To-day, that we sholde han so fair a grace?
But mighte this gold be caried fro this place
Hoom to myn hous, or elles un-to youres—
For wel ye woot that al this gold is oures—
Than were we in heigh felicitee.
But trewely, by daye it may nat be;
Men wolde seyn that we were theves stronge,
And for our owene tresor doon us honge.[1]
This tresor moste y-caried be by nighte
As wysly and as slyly as it mighte.
Wherfore I rede that cut[2] among us alle
Be drawe, and lat see wher the cut wol falle;
And he that hath the cut with herte blythe
Shal renne to the toune, and that ful swythe,[3]
And bringe us breed and wyn ful prively.
And two of us shul kepen subtilly
This tresor wel; and, if he wol nat tarie,
Whan it is night, we wol this tresor carie
By oon assent, wher-as us thinketh best.'
That oon of hem the cut broughte in his fest,
And bad hem drawe, and loke wher it wol falle;
And it fil on the yongeste of hem alle;
And forth toward the toun he wente anon.
And also sone as that he was gon,
That oon of hem spak thus un-to that other,
'Thou knowest wel thou art my sworne brother,
Thy profit wol I telle thee anon.
Thou woost wel that our felawe is agon;
And heer is gold, and that ful greet plentee,
That shal departed been among us three.
But natheles, if I can shape it so
That it departed were among us two,
Hadde I nat doon a freendes torn to thee?'
That other answerde, 'I noot how that may be;
He woot how that the gold is with us tweye;
What shal we doon, what shal we to him seye?'
'Shal it be conseil?'[4] seyde the firste shrewe,[5]
'And I shal tellen thee, in wordes fewe,
What we shal doon, and bringe it wel aboute.'
'I graunte,' quod that other, 'out of doute,
That, by my trouthe, I wol thee nat biwreye.'
'Now,' quod the firste, 'thou woost wel we be tweye,
And two of us shul strenger be than oon.
Look whan that he is set, and right anoon
Arys, as though thou woldest with him pleye;
And I shal ryve him thurgh the sydes tweye
Whyl that thou strogelest with him as in game,
And with thy dagger look thou do the same;
And than shal al this gold departed be,
My dere freend, bitwixen me and thee;
Than may we bothe our lustes al fulfille,
And pleye at dees righte at our owene wille.'
And thus acorded been thise shrewes tweye
To sleen the thridde, as ye han herd me seye.
This yongest, which that wente un-to the toun,
Ful ofte in herte he rolleth up and doun
The beautee of thise florins newe and brighte.
'O lord!' quod he, 'if so were that I mighte
Have al this tresor to my-self allone,
Ther is no man that liveth under the trone
Of God, that sholde live so mery as I!'
And atte laste the feend, our enemy,
Putte in his thought that he shold poyson beye,
With which he mighte sleen his felawes tweye;
For-why the feend fond him in swich lyvinge,
That he had leve him to sorwe bringe,
For this was outrely his fulle entente
To sleen hem bothe, and never to repente.
And forth he gooth, no lenger wolde he tarie,
Into the toun, un-to a pothecarie,
And preyed him, that he him wolde selle
Som poyson, that he mighte his rattes quelle;[6]
And eek ther was a polcat in his hawe,[7]
That, as he seyde, his capouns hadde y-slawe,

[1] cause us to be hanged.
[2] lot; the "cut" was the stick or straw cut longer (or shorter) than all the others.
[3] quickly. [4] a secret. [5] rascal.
[6] kill. [7] yard, hen-yard, literally "hedge."

And fayn he wolde wreke him, if he mighte,
On vermin, that destroyed him by nighte.
The pothecarie answerde, 'And thou shalt have
A thing that, al-so God my soule save,
In al this world ther nis no creature,
That ete or dronke hath of this confiture
Noght but the mountance[1] of a corn of whete,
That he ne shal his lyf anon forlete;
Ye, sterve[2] he shal, and that in lasse whyle
Than thou wolt goon a paas nat but a myle;
This poyson is so strong and violent.'
This cursed man hath in his hond y-hent
This poyson in a box, and sith he ran
In-to the nexte strete, un-to a man,
And borwed of him large botels three;
And in the two his poyson poured he;
The thridde he kepte clene for his drinke.
For al the night he shoop him[3] for to swinke[4]
In caryinge of the gold out of that place.
And whan this ryotour, with sory grace,
Had filled with wyn his grete botels three,
To his felawes agayn repaireth he.
What nedeth it to sermone of it more?
For right as they had cast his deeth bifore,
Right so they han him slayn, and that anon.
And whan that this was doon, thus spak that oon,
'Now lat us sitte and drinke, and make us merie,
And afterward we wol his body berie.'
And with that word it happed him, par cas,
To take the botel ther the poyson was,
And drank, and yaf his felawe drinke also,
For which anon they storven[5] bothe two.
But, certes, I suppose that Avicen
Wroot never in no canon, ne in no fen,[6]
Mo wonder[7] signes of empoisoning
Than hadde thise wrecches two, er hir ending.
Thus ended been thise homicydes two,
And eek the false empoysoner also.

O cursed sinne, ful of cursednesse!
O traytours homicyde, o wikkednesse!
O glotonye, luxurie, and hasardrye!
Thou blasphemour of Crist with vileinye
And othes grete, of usage and of pryde!
Allas! mankinde, how may it bityde,
That to thy creatour which that thee wroghte,
And with his precious herte-blood thee boghte,
Thou art so fals and so unkinde, allas!
Now, goode men, God forgeve yow your trespas,
And ware yow fro the sinne of avaryce.
Myn holy pardoun may yow alle waryce,[8]
So that ye offre nobles or sterlinges,[9]
Or elles silver broches, spones, ringes.
Boweth your heed under this holy bulle!
Cometh up, ye wyves, offreth of your wolle!
Your name I entre heer in my rolle anon;
In-to the blisse of hevene shul ye gon;
I yow assoile, by myn heigh power,
Yow that wol offre, as clene and eek as cleer
As ye were born; and, lo, sirs, thus I preche.
And Jesu Crist, that is our soules leche,
So graunte yow his pardon to receyve;
For that is best; I wol yow nat deceyve.
But sirs, o word forgat I in my tale,
I have relikes and pardon in my male,
As faire as any man in Engelond,
Whiche were me yeven by the popes hond.
If any of yow wol, of devocioun,
Offren, and han myn absolucioun,
Cometh forth anon, and kneleth heer adoun,
And mekely receyveth my pardoun:
Or elles, taketh pardon as ye wende,
Al newe and fresh, at every tounes ende,
So that ye offren alwey newe and newe
Nobles and pens, which that be gode and trewe.
It is an honour to everich that is heer,
That ye mowe have a suffisant pardoneer
T'assoille yow, in contree as ye ryde,
For aventures which that may bityde.
Peraventure ther may falle oon or two
Doun of his hors, and breke his nekke atwo.
Look which a seuretee is it to yow alle
That I am in your felaweship y-falle,
That may assoille yow, bothe more and lasse,
Whan that the soule shal fro the body passe.
I rede that our hoste heer shal biginne,
For he is most envoluped in sinne.
Com forth, sir hoste, and offre first anon,
And thou shalt kisse the reliks everichon,
Ye, for a grote! unbokel anon thy purs.
'Nay, nay,' quod he, 'than have I Cristes curs!

[1] amount. [2] die. [3] intended. [4] labour. [5] died.
[6] Avicenna (fl. 1000 A.D.), the great Arabian physician, wrote a medical treatise called the "Canon," with chapters termed "fens."
[7] wondrous.
[8] save. [9] silver coins.

Lat be,' quod he, 'it shal nat be, so thee'ch![1]
Thou woldest make me kisse thyn old breech,[2]
And swere it were a relik of a seint.'[3]

. . . . . .

Here is ended the Pardoners Tale.

THE TALE OF THE WYF OF BATHE

Here biginneth the Tale of the Wyf of Bathe

In th'olde dayes of the king Arthour,
Of which that Britons speken greet honour,
Al was this land fulfild of fayerye.
The elf-queen, with hir joly companye,
Daunced ful ofte in many a grene mede;
This was the olde opinion, as I rede.
I speke of manye hundred yeres ago;
But now can no man see none elves mo.
For now the grete charitee and prayeres
Of limitours and othere holy freres,
That serchen every lond and every streem,
As thikke as motes in the sonne-beem,
Blessinge halles, chambres, kichenes, boures,
Citees, burghes, castels, hye toures,
Thropes,[4] bernes, shipnes,[5] dayeryes,
This maketh that ther been no fayeryes.
For ther as wont to walken was an elf,
Ther walketh now the limitour himself
In undermeles[6] and in morweninges,
And seyth his matins and his holy thinges
As he goth in his limitacioun.
Wommen may go saufly up and doun,
In every bush, or under every tree;
Ther is noon other incubus but he,
And he ne wol doon hem non[7] dishonour.

And so bifel it, that this king Arthour
Hadde in his hous a lusty bacheler,
That on a day cam rydinge fro river;[8]
And happed that, allone as she was born,
He saugh a mayde walkinge him biforn,
Of whiche mayde anon, maugree hir heed,[9]
By verray force he rafte hir maydenheed;
For which oppressioun was swich clamour
And swich pursute un-to the king Arthour,
That dampned was this knight for to be deed
By cours of lawe, and sholde han lost his heed
Paraventure, swich was the statut tho;
But that the quene and othere ladies mo
So longe preyeden the king of grace,
Til he his lyf him graunted in the place,
And yaf him to the quene al at hir wille,
To chese, whether she wolde him save or spille.[10]

The quene thanketh the king with al hir might,
And after this thus spak she to the knight,
Whan that she saugh hir tyme, up-on a day:
'Thou standest yet,' quod she, 'in swich array
That of thy lyf yet hastow no suretee.
I grante thee lyf, if thou canst tellen me
What thing is it that wommen most desyren.
Be war, and keep thy nekke-boon from yren.
And if thou canst nat tellen it anon,
Yet wol I yeve thee leve for to gon
A twelf-month and a day, to seche and lere
An answere suffisant in this matere.
And suretee wol I han, er that thou pace,
Thy body for to yelden in this place.'

Wo was this knight and sorwefully he syketh;
But what! he may nat do al as him lyketh.
And at the laste, he chees him for to wende,
And come agayn, right at the yeres ende,
With swich answere as God wolde him purveye;
And taketh his leve, and wendeth forth his weye.

He seketh every hous and every place,
Wher-as he hopeth for to finde grace,
To lerne what thing wommen loven most;
But he ne coude arryven in no cost,
Wher-as he mighte finde in this matere
Two creatures accordinge in-fere.[11]

Somme seyde, wommen loven best richesse,
Somme seyde honour, somme seyde jolynesse;
Somme riche array, somme seyden lust abedde,
And ofte tyme to be widwe and wedde.

[1] as I may prosper.
[2] breeches.
[3] Here follows for a few lines a coarse quarrel between the two, but the knight reconciles them.
[4] Thorps, villages.
[5] cow-barns.
[6] Here apparently mid-afternoon.
[7] Most MSS. read *but*.
[8] That is, from hawking.
[9] in spite of all resistance.
[10] destroy.
[11] agreeing together.

Somme seyde, that our hertes been most esed
Whan that we been y-flatered and y-plesed.
He gooth ful ny the sothe, I wol nat lye;
A man shal winne us best with flaterye;
And with attendance and with bisinesse
Been we y-lymed,[1] both more and lesse.
And somme seyn, how that we loven best
For to be free, and do right as us lest,
And that no man repreve us of our vyce,
But seye that we be wyse, and no-thing nyce.[2]
For trewely, ther is noon of us alle,
If any wight wol clawe us on the galle,
That we nil kike,[3] for he seith us sooth;
Assay, and he shal finde it that so dooth.
For be we never so vicious with-inne,
We wol been holden wyse, and clene of sinne.
And somme seyn, that greet delyt han we
For to ben holden stable and eek secree,
And in o purpos stedefastly to dwelle,
And nat biwreye thing that men us telle.
But that tale is nat worth a rake-stele;[4]
Pardee, we wommen conne no-thing hele;[5]
Witnesse on Myda;[6] wol ye here the tale?
Ovyde, amonges othere thinges smale,
Seyde Myda hadde, under his longe heres,
Growinge up-on his heed two asses eres,
The whiche vyce he hidde, as he best mighte,
Ful subtilly from every mannes sighte,
That, save his wyf, ther wiste of it namo.
He loved hir most, and trusted hir also;
He preyede hir, that to no creature
She sholde tellen of his disfigure.
She swoor him nay, for al this world to winne,
She nolde do that vileinye or sinne,
To make hir housbond han so foul a name;
She nolde nat telle it for hir owene shame.
But nathelees, hir thoughte that she dyde,[7]
That she so longe sholde a conseil hyde;
Hir thoughte it swal so sore aboute hir herte,
That nedely som word hir moste asterte;[8]
And sith she dorste telle it to no man,
Doun to a mareys[9] faste by she ran;
Til she came there, hir herte was a-fyre,
And, as a bitore bombleth[10] in the myre,
She leyde hir mouth un-to the water doun:
'Biwreye me nat, thou water, with thy soun,'
Quod she, 'to thee I telle it, and namo;
Myn housbond hath longe asses eres two!
Now is myn herte all hool, now is it oute;
I mighte no lenger kepe it, out of doute.'
Heer may ye se, thogh we a tyme abyde,
Yet out it moot, we can no conseil hyde;
The remenant of the tale if ye wol here,
Redeth Ovyde, and ther ye may it lere.
This knight, of which my tale is specially,
Whan that he saugh he mighte nat come therby,
This is to seye, what wommen loven moost,
With-inne his brest ful sorweful was the goost;
But hoom he gooth, he mighte not sojourne.
The day was come that hoomward moste he tourne;
And in his wey it happed him to ryde,
In al this care, under a forest-syde,
Wher-as he saugh up-on[11] a daunce go
Of ladies foure and twenty, and yet mo;
Toward the whiche daunce he drow ful yerne,[12]
In hope that som wisdom sholde he lerne.
But certeinly, er he came fully there,
Vanisshed was this daunce, he niste where.
No creature saugh he that bar lyf,
Save on the grene he saugh sittinge a wyf;
A fouler wight ther may no man devyse.
Agayn the knight this olde wyf gan ryse,
And seyde, 'Sir knight, heer-forth ne lyth no wey.
Tel me what that ye seken, by your fey.
Paraventure it may the bettre be;
Thise olde folk can muchel thing,' quod she
'My leve mooder,' quod this knight, 'certeyn
I nam but deed, but-if that I can seyn
What thing it is that wommen most desyre;
Coude ye me wisse,[13] I wolde wel quyte your hyre.'[14]

[1] caught, as birds by lime-twigs. [2] silly.
[3] If any touch us on a tender spot we'll kick. Some MSS. have *like* for *kike*, giving the meaning — if any stroke our wound gently we will like it.
[4] rake-handle — still used in English dialects.
[5] know how to conceal nothing.
[6] Midas, Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, XI, 174, though the versions do not agree.
[7] it seemed to her as if she must perish.
[8] she had to say something.
[9] marsh. [10] as a bittern bumbles or booms.
[11] in. [12] eagerly. [13] show. [14] reward you.

'Plight me thy trouthe, heer in myn hand,' quod she,
'The nexte thing that I requere thee,
Thou shalt it do, if it lye in thy might;
And I wol telle it yow er it be night.'
'Have heer my trouthe,' quod the knight, 'I grante.'
'Thanne,' quod she, 'I dar me wel avante,
Thy lyf is sauf, for I wol stonde therby;
Up-on my lyf, the queen wol seye as I.
Lat see which is the proudeste of hem alle,
That wereth on a coverchief or a calle,[1]
That dar seye nay, of that I shal thee teche;
Lat us go forth with-outen lenger speche.'
Tho rouned she a pistel[2] in his ere,
And bad him to be glad, and have no fere.
Whan they be comen to the court, this knight
Seyde he had holde his day as he hadde hight,[3]
And redy was his answere, as he sayde.
Ful many a noble wyf, and many a mayde,
And many a widwe, for that they ben wyse,
The quene hir-self sittinge as a justyse,
Assembled been, his answere for to here;
And afterward this knight was bode appere.
To every wight comanded was silence,
And that the knight sholde telle in audience,
What thing that worldly wommen loven best.
This knight ne stood nat stille as doth a best,
But to his questioun anon answerde
With manly voys, that al the court it herde:
'My lige lady, generally,' quod he,
'Wommen desyren to have sovereyntee
As wel over hir housbond as hir love,
And for to been in maistrie him above;
This is your moste desyr, though ye me kille,
Doth as yow list, I am heer at your wille.'
In al the court ne was ther wyf ne mayde,
Ne widwe, that contraried that he sayde,
But seyden he was worthy han his lyf.
And with that word up stirte the olde wyf,
Which that the knight saugh sittinge in the grene:
'Mercy,' quod she, 'my sovereyn lady quene!

[1] caul, head-dress. [2] whispered a tale. [3] promised.

Er that your court departe, do me right.
I taughte this answere un-to the knight;
For which he plighte me his trouthe there,
The firste thing I wolde of him requere,
He wolde it do, if it lay in his might.
Bifore the court than preye I thee, sir knight,'
Quod she, 'that thou me take un-to thy wyf;
For wel thou wost that I have kept thy lyf.
If I sey fals, sey nay, up-on thy fey!'
This knight answerde, 'Allas! and weylawey!
I woot right wel that swich was my biheste.[4]
For Goddes love, as chees a newe requeste;
Tak al my good, and lat my body go.'
'Nay than,' quod she, 'I shrewe us bothe two!
For thogh that I be foul, and old, and pore,
I nolde for al the metal, ne for ore,
That under erthe is grave, or lyth above,
But-if thy wyf I were, and eek thy love.'
'My love?' quod he; 'nay, my dampnacioun!
Allas! that any of my nacioun
Sholde ever so foule disparaged be!'
But al for noght, the ende is this, that he
Constreyned was, he nedes moste hir wedde;
And taketh his olde wyf, and gooth to bedde.
Now wolden som men seye, paraventure,
That, for my necligence, I do no cure
To tellen yow the joye and al th'array
That at the feste was that ilke day.
To whiche thing shortly answere I shal;
I seye, ther nas no joye ne feste at al,
Ther nas but hevinesse and muche sorwe;
For prively he wedded hir on a morwe,
And al day after hidde him as an oule;
So wo was him, his wyf looked so foule.
Greet was the wo the knight hadde in his thoght,
Whan he was with his wyf a-bedde y-broght;
He walweth,[5] and he turneth to and fro.
His olde wyf lay smylinge evermo,
And seyde, 'O dere housbond, *benedicite!*
Fareth every knight thus with his wyf as ye?
Is this the lawe of king Arthures hous?
Is every knight of his so dangerous?[6]

[4] promise. [5] wallows, turns. [6] distant.

I am your owene love and eek your wyf;
I am she which that saved hath your lyf;
And certes, yet dide I yow never unright;
Why fare ye thus with me this firste night?
Ye faren lyk a man had lost his wit;
What is my gilt? for Goddes love, tel me it,
And it shal been amended, if I may.'
'Amended?' quod this knight, 'allas! nay, nay!
It wol nat been amended never mo!
Thou art so loothly, and so old also,
And ther-to comen of so lowe a kinde,
That litel wonder is, thogh I walwe and winde.[1]
So wolde God myn herte wolde breste!'
'Is this,' quod she, 'the cause of your unreste?'
'Ye, certainly,' quod he, 'no wonder is.'
'Now, sire,' quod she, 'I coude amende al this,
If that me liste, er it were dayes three,
So wel ye mighte bere yow un-to me.
But for ye speken of swich gentillesse
As is descended out of old richesse,
That therfore sholden ye be gentil men,
Swich arrogance is nat worth an hen.
Loke who that is most vertuous alway,
Privee and apert, and most entendeth ay
To do the gentil dedes that he can,
And tak him for the grettest gentil man.
Crist wol, we clayme of him our gentillesse,
Nat of our eldres for hir old richesse.
For thogh they yeve us al hir heritage,
For which we clayme to been of heigh parage,[2]
Yet may they nat biquethe, for no-thing,
To noon of us hir vertuous living,
That made hem gentil men y-called be;
And bad us folwen hem in swich degree.
Wel can the wyse poete of Florence,
That highte Dant, speken in this sentence;
Lo in swich maner rym[3] is Dantes tale:
"Ful selde[4] up ryseth by his branches smale
Prowesse of man; for God, of his goodnesse,
Wol that of him we clayme our gentillesse;"
For of our eldres may we no-thing clayme
But temporel thing, that man may hurte and mayme.

[1] twist.
[2] kindred.
[3] rhyme. — *Purgatorio*, VII, 121.
[4] seldom.

Eek every wight wot this as wel as I,
If gentillesse were planted naturelly
Un-to a certeyn linage, doun the lyne,
Privee ne apert, than wolde they never fyne[5]
To doon of gentillesse the faire offyce;
They mighte do no vileinye or vyce.
Tak fyr, and ber it in the derkeste hous
Bitwix this and the mount of Caucasus,
And lat men shette the dores and go thenne;
Yet wol the fyr as faire lye and brenne,
As twenty thousand men mighte it biholde;
His office naturel ay wol it holde,
Up peril of my lyf, til that it dye.
Heer may ye see wel, how that genterye
Is nat annexed to possessioun,
Sith folk ne doon hir operacioun
Alwey, as dooth the fyr, lo! in his kinde.
For, God it woot, men may wel often finde
A lordes sone do shame and vileinye;
And he that wol han prys of his gentrye
For he was boren of a gentil hous,
And hadde hise eldres noble and vertuous,
And nil him-selven do no gentil dedis,
Ne folwe his gentil auncestre that deed is,
He nis nat gentil, be he duk or erl;
For vileyns sinful dedes make a cherl.
For gentillesse nis but renomee[6]
Of thyne auncestres, for hir heigh bountee,
Which is a strange thing to thy persone.
Thy gentillesse cometh fro God allone;
Than comth our verray gentillesse of grace,
It was no-thing biquethe us with our place.
Thenketh how noble, as seith Valerius,[7]
Was thilke Tullius Hostilius,
That out of povert roos to heigh noblesse.
Redeth Senek, and redeth eek Boëce,
Ther shul ye seen expres that it no drede[8] is,
That he is gentil that doth gentil dedis;
And therfore, leve housbond, I thus conclude,
Al were it that myne auncestres were rude,
Yet may the hye God, and so hope I,
Grante me grace to liven vertuously.
Thanne am I gentil, whan that I biginne
To liven vertuously and weyve[9] sinne.
And ther-as ye of povert me repreve,
The hye God, on whom that we bileve,
In wilful poverte chees to live his lyf.
And certes every man, mayden, or wyf,

[5] cease.
[6] renown.
[7] Valerius Maximus (first century A.D.) bk. III, chap. 4, of his *De Factis Dictisque Memorabilibus*.
[8] doubt.
[9] shun.

May understonde that Jesus, hevene king,
Ne wolde nat chese a vicious living.
Glad povert is an honest thing, certeyn;
This wol Senek and othere clerkes seyn.
Who-so that halt him payd[1] of his poverte,
I holde him riche, al hadde he nat a sherte,
He that coveyteth is a povre wight,
For he wolde han that is nat in his might.
But he that noght hath, ne coveyteth have,
Is riche, al-though ye holde him but a knave.
Verray povert, it singeth proprely;
Juvenal seith of povert merily:
"The povre man, whan he goth by the weye,
Bifore the theves he may singe and pleye."[2]
Povert is hateful good, and, as I gesse,
A ful greet bringer out of bisinesse;
A greet amender eek of sapience
To him that taketh it in pacience.[3]
Povert is this, al-though it seme elenge[4]
Possessioun, that no wight wol chalenge.
Povert ful ofte, whan a man is lowe,
Maketh his God and eek him-self to knowe.[5]
Povert a spectacle[6] is, as thinketh me,
Thurgh which he may his verray frendes see.
And therefore, sire, sin that I noght yow greve,
Of my povert na-more ye me repreve.
Now, sire, of elde[7] ye repreve me;
And certes, sire, thogh noon auctoritee
Were in no book, ye gentils of honour
Seyn that men sholde an old wight doon favour,
And clepe him fader, for your gentillesse;
And auctours[8] shal I finden, as I gesse.
Now ther ye seye that I am foul and old,
Than drede you noght to be a cokewold;
For filthe and elde, al-so mote I thee,
Been grete wardeyns up-on chastitee.
But nathelees, sin I knowe your delyt,
I shal fulfille your worldly appetyt.
Chees now,' quod she, 'oon of thise thinges tweye,—
To han me foul and old til that I deye,
And be to yow a trewe humble wyf,
And never yow displese in al my lyf,
Or elles ye wol han me yong and fair,
And take your aventure[9] of the repair
That shal be to your hous, by-cause of me,
Or in som other place, may wel be.
Now chees your-selven, whether[10] that yow lyketh.'
This knight avyseth him and sore syketh,[11]
But atte laste he seyde in this manere,
'My lady and my love, and wyf so dere,
I put me in your wyse governance;
Cheseth your-self, which may be most plesance,
And most honour to yow and me also.
I do no fors the whether[12] of the two;
For as yow lyketh, it suffiseth me.'
'Thanne have I gete of yow maistrye,' quod she,
'Sin I may chese, and governe as me lest?'
'Ye, certes, wyf,' quod he, 'I holde it best.'
'Kis me,' quod she, 'we be no lenger wrothe;
For, by my trouthe, I wol be to yow bothe,
This is to seyn, ye, bothe fair and good.
I prey to God that I mot sterven wood,[13]
But I to yow be al-so good and trewe
As ever was wyf, sin that the world was newe.
And, but I be to-morn as fair to sene
As any lady, emperyce, or quene,
That is bitwixe the est and eke the west,
Doth with my lyf and deeth right as yow lest.
Cast up the curtin, loke how that it is.'
And whan the knight saugh verraily al this,
That she so fair was, and so yong ther-to,
For joye he hente hir in his armes two,
His herte bathed in a bath of blisse;
A thousand tyme a-rewe[14] he gan hir kisse.
And she obeyed him in every thing
That mighte doon him plesance or lyking.
And thus they live, un-to hir lyves ende,
In parfit joye; and Jesu Crist us sende
Housbondes meke, yonge, and fresshe a-bedde,
And grace t'overbyde[15] hem that we wedde.
And eek I preye Jesu shorte hir lyves
That wol nat be governed by hir wyves;
And olde and angry nigardes of dispence,
God sende hem sone verray pestilence.

Here endeth the Wyves Tale of Bathe.

[1] pleased. [2] Juvenal's *Satires*, X, 22.
[3] These sentiments are found in Vincent of Beauvais' *Speculum Historiale*, bk. X, chap. 71, and in other writers. [4] wearisome.
[5] Causes a man to know himself and God.
[6] lens, pair of spectacles. [7] age.
[8] authorities to support me in this. [9] risk.
[10] whichever of the two. [11] sighs.
[12] I care not which. [13] die mad.
[14] in succession. [15] outlive.

THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE

MANY men seyn that in sweveninges[1]
Ther nis but fables and lesinges;[2]
But men may somme swevenes seen,
Which hardely[3] ne false been,
But afterward ben apparaunte.
This may I drawe to waraunte
An authour, that hight Macrobes,
That halt not dremes false ne lees,[2]
But undoth[4] us the avisioun
That whylom mette king Cipioun.[5]
And who-so sayth, or weneth it be
A jape, or elles nycetee[6]
To wene that dremes after falle,
Let who-so liste a fool me calle.
For this trowe I, and say for me,
That dremes signifiaunce be
Of good and harme to many wightes,
That dremen in her slepe a-nightes
Ful many thinges covertly,
That fallen after al openly.

THE DREAM

Within my twenty yere of age,
Whan that Love taketh his corage[7]
Of yonge folk, I wente sone
To bedde, as I was wont to done,
And fast I sleep; and in sleping,
Me mette[8] swiche a swevening,
That lykede me wonders wel;
But in that sweven is never a del
That it nis afterward befalle,
Right as this dreem wol telle us alle.
Now this dreem wol I ryme aright,
To make your hertes gaye and light;
For Love it prayeth, and also
Commaundeth me that it be so.
And if ther any aske me,
Whether that it be he or she,
How this booke which is here
Shall hatte,[9] that I rede you here;
It is the Romance of the Rose,
In which al the art of love I close.
The mater fair is of to make;
God graunte in gree[10] that she it take
For whom that it begonnen is!
And that is she that hath, y-wis,
So mochel prys; and ther-to she
So worthy is biloved be,
That she wel oughte, of prys and right,
Be cleped Rose of every wight.
That it was May me thoughte tho —
It is fyve yere or more ago;
That it was May, thus dremed me,
In tyme of love and jolitee,
That al thing ginneth waxen gay,
For ther is neither busk nor hay[11]
In May, that it nil shrouded been,
And it with newe leves wreen.[12]
These wodes eek recoveren grene,
That drye in winter been to sene;
And th' erthe wexeth proud withalle,
For swote[13] dewes that on it falle,
And al the pore estat forget
In which that winter hadde it set;
And than bicometh the ground so proud
That it wol have a newe shroud,
And maketh so queynt his robe and fayr
That it hath hewes an hundred payr
Of gras and floures, inde and pers,[14]
And many hewes ful dyvers:
That is the robe I mene, y-wis,
Through which the ground to preisen is.
The briddes, that han left hir song,
Whyl they han suffred cold so strong
In wedres[15] grille,[16] and derk to sighte,
Ben in May, for the sonne brighte,
So glade, that they shewe in singing
That in hir herte is swich lyking
That they mote singen and be light.
Than doth the nightingale hir might
To make noyse, and singen blythe.
Than is blisful, many a sythe,[17]
The chelaundre[18] and the papingay.[19]
Than yonge folk entenden[20] ay
For to ben gay and amorous,
The tyme is than so savorous.[21]
Hard is his herte that loveth nought
In May, whan al this mirth is wrought;
Whan he may on these braunches here
The smale briddes singen clere
Hir blisful swete song pitous;
And in this sesoun delitous,[22]

[1] dreams. [2] lies. [3] surely. [4] explains. [5] The *Somnium Scipionis* of Cicero, known in the commentary by Macrobius (fl. 400 A.D.). [6] A joke or a silly thing. [7] liking. [8] I dreamed. [9] be called. [10] favor. [11] bush nor hedge. [12] cover. [13] sweet. [14] dark blue and light blue. [15] storms. [16] savage. [17] time. [18] a kind of lark. [19] properly parrot; here green woodpecker. [20] are disposed. [21] pleasant. [22] delightful.

Whan love affrayeth[1] alle thing,
Me thoughte a-night, in my sleping,
Right in my bed, ful redily,
That it was by the morowe erly,
And up I roos and gan me clothe;
Anoon I wissh[2] myn hondes bothe;
A sylvre nedle forth I drogh
Out of an aguiler[3] queynt y-nogh,
And gan this nedle threde anon;
For out of toun me list to gon
The sowne of briddes for to here,
That on thise busshes singen clere.
And in the swete sesoun that leef[4] is,
With a threde basting my slevis,[5]
Aloon I wente in my playing,
The smale foules song harkning;
That peyned hem[6] ful many a payre
To singe on bowes blosmed fayre.
Jolif and gay, ful of gladnesse,
Toward a river I gan me dresse,
That I herde renne faste by;
For fairer playing non saugh I
Than playen me by that riveer,
For from an hille that stood ther neer
Cam doun the streem ful stif and bold.
Cleer was the water, and as cold
As any welle is, sooth to seyne;
And somdel lasse it was than Seine,
But it was straighter wel away.
And never saugh I, er that day,
The water that so wel lyked[7] me;
And wonder glad was I to see
That lusty place, and that riveer;
And with that water that ran so cleer
My face I wissh. Tho saugh I wel
The botme paved everydel
With gravel, ful of stones shene.
The medewe softe, swote, and grene,
Beet[8] right on the water-syde.
Ful cleer was than the morow-tyde,
And ful attempre,[9] out of drede.
Tho gan I walke through the mede,
Dounward ay in my pleying,
The river-syde costeying.[10]

THE GARDEN

And whan I had a whyle goon,
I saugh a GARDIN right anoon,
Ful long and brood, and everydel
Enclosed was, and walled wel,
With hye walles embatailled,
Portrayed without, and wel entailled[11]

1 distracts. 2 washed. 3 needle-case. 4 dear. 5 They often sewed on the long drooping sleeves each time the garment was donned. 6 took pains. 7 pleased. 8 Impinged. 9 temperate. 10 coasting, following along. 11 decorated.

With many riche portraitures;
And bothe images and peyntures
Gan I biholde bisily.
And I wol telle you, redily,
Of thilke images the semblaunce,
As fer as I have remembraunce.

HATE

A-midde saugh I HATE stonde,
That for hir wrathe, ire, and onde,[12]
Semed to been a moveresse,[13]
An angry wight, a chideresse;[14]
And ful of gyle, and fel corage,[15]
By semblaunt was that ilke image.
And she was no-thing wel arrayed,
But lyk a wood[16] womman afrayed;
Y-frounced[17] foule was hir visage,
And grenning[18] for dispitous[19] rage;
Hir nose snorted up for tene.[20]
Ful hidous was she for to sene,
Ful foul and rusty was she, this.
Hir heed y-writhen[21] was, y-wis,
Ful grimly with a greet towayle.

FELONYE

An image of another entayle,[22]
A lift half,[23] was hir faste by:
Hir name above hir heed saugh I,
And she was called FELONYE.

VILANYE

Another image, that VILANYE
Y-cleped was, saugh I and fond
Upon the walle on hir right hond.
Vilanye was lyk somdel[24]
That other image; and, trusteth wel,
She semed a wikked creature.
By countenaunce, in portrayture,
She semed be ful despitous,
And eek ful proud and outrageous.
Wel coude he peynte, I undertake,
That swiche image coude make.
Ful foul and cherlish semed she,
And eek vilaynous for to be,
And litel coude of norture,
To worshipe any creature.[25]

[*The descriptions of Covetousness, Avarice, Envy, and Poverty are omitted.*]

Tho gan I go a ful gret pas
Envyroning even in compas[26]
The closing of the square wal,
Til that I fond a wiket smal

12 malice. 13 fomentress of quarrels. 14 scolder. 15 bad disposition. 16 mad. 17 wrinkled. 18 grinning. 19 spiteful. 20 vexation. 21 encircled. 22 fashion. 23 On the left side. 24 somewhat. 25 knew little of manners to be polite to any. 26 Going quite about the circuit.

So shet, that I ne mighte in goon,
And other entree was ther noon.

THE DOOR

Upon this dore I gan to smyte,
That was [so] fetys[1] and so lyte;
For other wey coude I not seke.
Ful long I shoof,[2] and knokked eke,
And stood ful long and oft herkning
If that I herde a wight coming;
Til that the dore of thilke entree
A mayden curteys opened me.

YDELNESSE

Hir heer was as yelowe of hewe
As any basin[3] scoured newe.
Hir flesh [as] tendre as is a chike,
With bente[4] browes, smothe and slike;
And by mesure large were
The opening of hir yën clere.
Hir nose of good proporcioun,
Hir yën greye as a faucoun,
With swete breeth and wel savoured.
Hir face whyt and wel coloured,
With litel mouth, and round to see;
A clove[5] chin eek hadde she.
Hir nekke was of good fasoun
In lengthe and gretnesse, by resoun,
Withoute bleyne, scabbe, or royne.[6]
Fro Jerusalem unto Burgoyne
Ther nis a fairer nekke, y-wis,
To fele how smothe and softe it is.
Hir throte, al-so whyt of hewe
As snow on braunche snowed newe.
Of body ful wel wrought was she;
Men neded not, in no cuntree,
A fairer body for to seke.
And of fyn orfrays[7] had she eke
A chapelet: so semly oon
Ne wered never mayde upon;
And faire above that chapelet
A rose gerland had she set.
She hadde [in honde] a gay[8] mirour,
And with a riche gold tressour[9]
Hir heed was tressed queyntely;
Hir sleves sewed fetisly.
And for to kepe hir hondes faire
Of gloves whyte she hadde a paire.
And she hadde on a cote of grene
Of cloth of Gaunt;[10] withouten wene,[11]
Wel semed by hir apparayle
She was not wont to greet travayle.
For whan she kempt[12] was fetisly,
And wel arayed and richely,
Thanne had she doon al hir journee;[13]
For mery and wel bigoon[14] was she.
She ladde a lusty lyf in May,
She hadde no thought, by night ne day,
Of no-thing, but it were oonly
To graythe[15] hir wel and uncouthly.[16]
Whan that this dore hadde opened me
This mayden, semely for to see,
I thanked hir as I best mighte,
And axede hir how that she highte,[17]
And what she was, I axede eke.
And she to me was nought unmeke,
Ne of hir answer daungerous,[18]
But faire answerde, and seide thus: —
'Lo, sir, my name is YDELNESSE;
So clepe men me, more and lesse.
Ful mighty and ful riche am I,
And that of oon thing, namely;[19]
For I entende[20] to no-thing
But to my joye, and my pleying,
And for to kembe and tresse[21] me.
Aqueynted am I, and privee
With Mirthe, lord of this gardyn,
That fro the lande Alexandryn
Made the trees be hider fet,
That in this gardin been y-set.
And when the trees were woxen[22] on highte,
This wal, that stant here in thy sighte,
Dide Mirthe enclosen[23] al aboute;
And these images, al withoute,
He dide hem bothe entaile[24] and peynte,
That neither ben jolyf ne queynte,
But they ben ful of sorowe and wo,
As thou hast seen a whyle ago.
'And ofte tyme, him to solace,
Sir Mirthe cometh into this place,
And eek with him cometh his meynee,
That liven in lust and jolitee.
And now is Mirthe therin, to here
The briddes, how they singen clere,
The mavis and the nightingale,
And other joly briddes smale.
And thus he walketh to solace
Him and his folk; for swetter place
To pleyen in he may not finde,
Although he soughte oon in-til Inde.
The alther-fairest[25] folk to see
That in this world may founde be

[1] well-made. [2] shoved. [3] The basin would be of latten. [4] arched. [5] cloven, i.e. dimpled. [6] roughness. [7] gold-work. [8] pretty. [9] head-dress, caul. [10] Ghent. [11] beyond doubt.
[12] combed, dressed. [13] day's work. [14] satisfied. [15] clothe. [16] rarely. [17] was called. [18] haughty. [19] especially. [20] apply myself. [21] do my hair. [22] waxed. [23] had it enclosed. [24] carve. [25] fairest of all.

Hath Mirthe with him in his route,
That folowen him alwayes aboute.'
When Ydelnesse had told al this,
And I hadde herkned wel, y-wis,
Than seide I to dame Ydelnesse,
'Now al-so wisly[1] God me blesse,
Sith Mirthe, that is so fair and free,
Is in this yerde with his meynee,[2]
Fro thilke assemblee, if I may,
Shal no man werne[3] me to-day,
That I this night ne mote it see.
For, wel wene I, ther with him be
A fair and joly companye
Fulfilled of alle curtesye.'
And forth, without wordes mo,
In at the wiket wente I tho,
That Ydelnesse hadde opened me,
Into that gardin fair to see.

THE GARDEN

And whan I was [ther]in, y-wis,
Myn herte was ful glad of this.
For wel wende I ful sikerly
Have been in paradys erth[e]ly;
So fair it was, that, trusteth wel,
It semed a place espirituel.
For certes, as at my devys,
Ther is no place in paradys
So good in for to dwelle or be
As in that GARDIN, thoughte me;
For there was many a brid singing,
Throughout the yerd al thringing.[4]
In many places were nightingales,
Alpes,[5] finches, and wodewales,[6]
That in her swete song delyten
In thilke place as they habyten.[7]
Ther mighte men see many flokkes
Of turtles and [of] laverokkes.
Chalaundres[8] fele saw I there,
That wery, nigh forsongen[9] were.
And thrustles, terins,[10] and mavys,[11]
That songen for to winne hem prys,[12]
And eek to sormounte in hir song
These other briddes hem among.
By note made fair servyse
These briddes, that I you devyse;
They songe hir song as faire and wel
As angels doon espirituel.
And, trusteth wel, whan I hem herde,
Full lustily and wel I ferde;
For never yit swich melodye
Was herd of man that mighte dye.

Swich swete song was hem among,
That me thoughte it no briddes song,
But it was wonder lyk to be
Song of mermaydens of the see;
That, for her singing is so clere,
Though we mermaydens clepe hem here
In English, as in our usaunce,
Men clepe[n] hem sereyns[13] in Fraunce.
Ententif[14] weren for to singe
These briddes that nought unkunninge
Were of hir craft, and apprentys,
But of [hir] song sotyl and wys.
And certes, whan I herde hir song,
And saw the grene place among,
In herte I wex so wonder gay,
That I was never erst, er that day,
So jolyf, nor so wel bigo,
Ne mery in herte, as I was tho.
And than wiste I, and saw ful wel,
That Ydelnesse me served wel,
That me putte in swich jolitee.
Hir freend wel oughte I for to be,
Sith she the dore of that gardyn
Hadde opened, and me leten in.
From hennesforth how that I wroughte,
I shal you tellen, as me thoughte.
First, whereof Mirthe served[15] there,
And eek what folk ther with him were,
Without[e] fable I wol descryve.
And of that gardin eek as blyve[16]
I wol you tellen after this.
The faire fasoun al, y-wis,
That wel [y-]wrought was for the nones,
I may not telle you al at ones:
But as I may and can, I shal
By ordre tellen you it al.
Ful fair servyse and eek ful swete
These briddes maden as they sete.
Layes of love, ful wel sowning
They songen in hir jargoning;
Summe highe and summe eek lowe songe
Upon the braunches grene y-spronge.
The sweetnesse of hir melodye
Made al myn herte in reverdye.[17]
And whan that I hadde herd, I trowe,
These briddes singing on a rowe,
Than mighte I not withholde me
That I ne wente[18] in for to see
Sir Mirthe; for my desiring
Was him to seen, over alle thing,
His countenaunce and his manere:
That sighte was to me ful dere.

. . . . . .

[1] so sure as. [2] retinue. [3] forbid. [4] thronging. [5] Bullfinches. [6] green woodpeckers. [7] In that place which they inhabit. [8] Larks. [9] sung out. [10] tarins, siskins. [11] song-thrush. [12] reputation.
[13] sirens. [14] Eager. [15] employed himself. [16] immediately. [17] rejoicing. [18] from going.

THE PARLEMENT OF FOULES

THE PROEM

THE lyf so short, the craft so long to lerne,
Th'assay so hard, so sharp the conquering,
The dredful joye, that alwey slit so yerne,[1]
Al this mene I by love, that my feling
Astonyeth with his wonderful worching
So sore y-wis, that whan I on him thinke,
Nat wot I wel wher that I wake or winke.

For al be that I knowe not love in dede,
Ne wot how that he quyteth folk hir hyre,
Yet happeth me ful ofte in bokes rede
Of his miracles, and his cruel yre;
Ther rede I wel he wol be lord and syre,
I dar not seyn, his strokes been so sore,
But God save swich a lord! I can no more.

Of usage, what for luste what for lore,[2]
On bokes rede I ofte, as I yow tolde.
But wherfor that I speke al this? Not yore
Agon hit happed me for to beholde
Upon a boke, was write with lettres olde;
And ther-upon, a certeyn thing to lerne,
The longe day ful faste I radde and yerne.[3]

For out of olde feldes, as men seith,
Cometh al this newe corn fro yeer to yere;
And out of olde bokes, in good feith,
Cometh al this newe science that men lere.[4]
But now to purpos as of this matere —
To rede forth hit gan me so delyte,
That al the day me thoughte but a lyte.

This book of which I make mencioun,
Entitled was al thus, as I shal telle,
'Tullius of the dreme of Scipioun';[5]
Chapitres seven hit hadde, of hevene and helle,
And erthe, and soules that therinne dwelle,
Of whiche, as shortly as I can hit trete,
Of his sentence I wol you seyn the grete.[6]

First telleth hit, whan Scipioun was come
In Afrik, how he mette Massinisse,
That him for joye in armes hath y-nome.[7]
Than telleth hit hir speche and al the blisse
That was betwix hem, till the day gan misse;[8]
And how his auncestre, African so dere,
Gan in his slepe that night to him appere.

Than telleth hit that, fro a sterry place,
How African hath him Cartage shewed,
And warned him before of al his grace,
And seyde him, what man, lered other lewed,
That loveth comun profit, wel y-thewed,[9]
He shal unto a blisful place wende,
Ther as joye is that last withouten ende.

Than asked he if folk that heer be dede
Have lyf and dwelling in another place;
And African seyde, 'Ye, withoute drede,'
And that our present worldes lyves space
Nis but a maner deth, what wey we trace,
And rightful folk shal go, after they dye,
To heven; and shewed him the galaxye.

Than shewed he him the litel erthe, that heer is,
At regard of[10] the hevenes quantite;
And after shewed he him the nyne speres,[11]
And after that the melodye herde he
That cometh of thilke speres thryes three,
The welle[12] is of musyke and melodye
In this world heer, and cause of armonye.

Than bad he him, sin erthe was so lyte,
And ful of torment and of harde grace,
That he ne shulde him in the world delyte.
Than tolde he him, in certyn yeres space,
That every sterre shulde come into his place
Ther hit was first; and al shulde[13] out of minde
That in this worlde is don of al mankinde.

Than prayde him Scipioun to telle him al
The wey to come un-to that hevene blisse;

[1] slideth, slips away, so soon.
[2] Habitually, sometimes for pleasure, sometimes for edification.
[3] I read closely and eagerly. [4] learn.
[5] Cicero's *Somnium Scipionis* in the commentary of Macrobius. See line 111, below. [6] gist.
[7] taken. [8] fail. [9] virtuous. [10] As compared with. [11] spheres. [12] source. [13] Supply "depart."

And he seyde, 'Know thy-self first immortal,
And loke ay besily thou werke and wisse[1]
To comun profit, and thou shalt nat misse
To comen swiftly to that place dere,
That ful of blisse is and of soules clere.

But brekers of the lawe, soth to seyne,
And lecherous folk, after that they be dede,
Shul alwey whirle aboute th'erthe in peyne,
Til many a world be passed, out of drede,
And than, for-yeven alle hir wikked dede,
Than shul they come unto that blisful place,
To which to comen God thee sende his grace!'—

The day gan failen, and the derke night,
That reveth bestes from hir besinesse,
Berafte me my book for lakke of light,
And to my bedde I gan me for to dresse,
Fulfild of thought and besy hevinesse;
For bothe I hadde thing which that I nolde,
And eek I ne hadde that thing that I wolde.

But fynally my spirit, at the laste,
For-wery of my labour al the day,
Took rest, that made me to slepe faste,
And in my slepe I mette,[2] as I lay,
How African, right in that selfe aray
That Scipioun him saw before that tyde,
Was comen, and stood right at my beddes syde.

The wery hunter, slepinge in his bed,
To wode ayein his minde goth anoon;
The juge dremeth how his plees ben sped;
The carter dremeth how his cartes goon;
The riche, of gold; the knight fight with his foon,[3]
The seke met he drinketh of the tonne;
The lover met he hath his lady wonne.

Can I nat seyn if that the cause were
For I had red of African beforn,
That made me to mete that he stood there;
But thus seyde he, 'Thou hast thee so wel born
In loking of myn olde book to-torn,
Of which Macrobie roghte nat a lyte,
That somdel of thy labour wolde I quyte!'—

[1] teach. [2] dreamed. [3] foes. A.S. *gefān*.

Citherea! thou blisful lady swete,
That with thy fyr-brand dauntest whom thee lest,
And madest me this sweven for to mete,
Be thou my help in this, for thou mayst best;
As wisly as I saw thee north-north-west,
When I began my sweven for to wryte,
So yif me might to ryme hit and endyte!

THE STORY

This forseid African me hente anoon,
And forth with him unto a gate broghte
Right of a parke, walled with grene stoon;
And over the gate, with lettres large y-wroghte,
Ther weren vers y-writen, as me thoghte,
On eyther halfe, of ful gret difference,
Of which I shal yow sey the pleyn sentence.

'Thorgh me men goon in-to that blisful place
Of hertes hele and dedly woundes cure;
Thorgh me men goon unto the welle of Grace,
Ther grene and lusty May shal ever endure;
This is the wey to al good aventure;
Be glad, thou reder, and thy sorwe ofcaste;
Al open am I; passe in, and hy the faste!'

'Thorgh me men goon,' than spak that other syde,
'Unto the mortal strokes of the spere,
Of which Disdayn and Daunger is the gyde,
Ther tree shal never fruit ne leves bere.
This streem you ledeth to the sorwful were,[4]
Ther as the fish in prison is al drye;
Th'eschewing is only the remedye.'

Thise vers of gold and blak y-writen were,
The whiche I gan a stounde[5] to beholde,
For with that oon encresed ay my fere,
And with that other gan myn herte bolde.
That oon me hette, that other did me colde;
No wit had I, for errour, for to chese,
To entre or flee, or me to save or lese.

[4] fish-weir. [5] a while.

Right as, betwixen adamauntes[1] two
Of even might, a pece of iren y-set,
That hath no might to meve to ne fro—
For what that on may hale, that other let—[2]
Ferde I, that niste whether me was bet,[3]
To entre or leve, til African my gyde
Me hente, and shoof[4] in at the gates wyde,

And seyde, 'Hit stondeth writen in thy face,
Thyn errour, though thou telle it not to me;
But dred thee nat to come in-to this place,
For this wryting is no-thing ment by[5] thee,
Ne by noon, but he Loves servant be;
For thou of love hast lost thy tast, I gesse,
As seek man hath of swete and bitternesse.

But natheles, al-though that thou be dulle,
Yit that thou canst not do, yit mayst thou see;
For many a man that may not stonde a pulle,
Yit lyketh him at the wrastling for to be,
And demeth yit wher he do bet or he;
And if thou haddest cunning for t'endyte,
I shal thee shewen mater of to wryte.'

With that my hond in his he took anoon,
Of which I comfort caughte, and wente in faste;
But lord! so I was glad and wel begoon![6]
For over-al, wher that I myn eyen caste,
Were treës clad with leves that ay shal laste,
Eche in his kinde, of colour fresh and grene
As emeraude, that joye was to sene.

The bilder ook, and eek the hardy asshe;
The piler[7] elm, the cofre unto careyne;[8]
The boxtree piper;[9] holm to whippes lasshe;[10]
The sayling[11] firr; the cipres, deth to pleyne;
The sheter[12] ew, the asp for shaftes pleyne;
The olyve of pees, and eek the drunken vyne,
The victor palm, the laurer to devyne.[13]

[1] magnets. [2] one pulls, the other hinders. [3] knew not which was better for me. [4] seized and shoved. [5] concerning. [6] situated. [7] for posts. [8] coffins for corpses. [9] for making whistles. [10] Apparently, furnishing handles for lashes. [11] good for masts. [12] "shooter," because used for bows. [13] used in divination.

A garden saw I, ful of blosmy bowes,
Upon a river, in a grene mede,
Ther as that swetnesse evermore y-now is,
With floures whyte, blewe, yelowe, and rede;
And colde welle-stremes, no-thing dede,
That swommen ful of smale fisshes lighte,
With finnes rede and scales silver-brighte.

On every bough the briddes herde I singe,
With voys of aungel in hir armonye,
Som besyed hem hir briddes forth to bringe.[14]
The litel conyes to hir pley gunne hye;
And further al aboute I gan espye
The dredful[15] roo, the buk, the hert and hinde,
Squerels, and bestes smale of gentil kinde.

Of instruments of strenges in acord
Herde I so pleye a ravisshing swetnesse,
That God, that maker is of al and lord,
Ne herde never better, as I gesse;
Therwith a wind, unnethe[16] hit might be lesse,
Made in the leves grene a noise softe
Acordant to the foules songe on-lofte.

The air of that place so attempre[17] was
That never was grevaunce of hoot ne cold;
Ther wex eek every holsom spyce and gras,
Ne no man may ther wexe seek ne old;
Yet was ther joye more a thousand fold
Then man can telle; ne never wolde it nighte,
But ay cleer day to any mannes sighte.

Under a tree, besyde a welle, I say
Cupyde our lord his arwes forge and fyle;
And at his fete his bowe al redy lay;
And wel his doghter tempred al the whyle
The hedes in the welle, and with hir wyle[18]
She couched[19] hem after as they shulde serve,
Som for to slee, and som to wounde and kerve.

Tho was I war of Plesaunce anon-right,
And of Aray, and Lust, and Curtesye;
And of the Craft that can and hath the might
To doon by force a wight to do folye—
Disfigurat was she, I nil not lye;

[14] to rear their chicks. [15] timid. [16] hardly. [17] temperate. [18] guile, subtlety. [19] arranged.

And by him-self, under an oke, I gesse,
Sawe I Delyt, that stood with Gentilnesse.

I saw Beautee, withouten any atyr,
And Youthe, ful of game and Jolyte,
Fool-hardinesse, Flatery, and Desyr,
Messagerye, and Mede, and other three —
Hir names shul noght here be told for me —
And upon pilers grete of jasper longe
I saw a temple of bras y-founded stronge.

Aboute the temple daunceden alway
Wommen y-nowe, of whiche somme ther were
Faire of hem-self, and somme of hem were gay; [1]
In kirtels, al disshevele, wente they there —
That was hir office alwey, yeer by yere —
And on the temple, of doves whyte and faire
Saw I sittinge many a hundred paire.

Before the temple-dore ful soberly
Dame Pees sat, with a curteyn in hir hond:
And hir besyde, wonder discretly,
Dame Pacience sitting ther I fond
With face pale, upon an hille of sond;
And alder-next, within and eek withoute,
Behest and Art, and of hir folke a route.

Within the temple, of syghes hote as fyr
I herde a swogh [2] that gan aboute renne;
Which syghes were engendred with desyr,
That maden every auter for to brenne
Of newe flaume; and wel aspyed I thenne
That al the cause of sorwes that they drye [3]
Com of the bitter goddesse Jalousye.

The god Priapus saw I, as I wente,
Within the temple, in soverayn place stonde,
In swich aray as whan the asse him shente
With crye by night, [4] and with his ceptre in honde;
Ful besily men gunne assaye and fonde
Upon his hede to sette, of sondry hewe,
Garlondes ful of fresshe floures newe.

And in a privee corner, in disporte,
Fond I Venus and hir porter Richesse,
That was ful noble and hauteyn of hir porte.

Derk was that place, but afterward lightnesse
I saw a lyte, unnethe [5] hit might be lesse;
And on a bed of golde she lay to reste,
Til that the hote sonne gan to weste.

Hir gilte heres with a golden threde
Y-bounden were, untressed as she lay,
And naked fro the breste unto the hede
Men might hir see; and, sothly for to say,
The remenant wel kevered to my pay [6]
Right with a subtil kerchef of Valence, [7]
Ther was no thikker cloth of no defence.

The place yaf a thousand savours swote,
And Bachus, god of wyn, sat hir besyde,
And Ceres next, that doth of hunger bote; [8]
And, as I seide, amiddes lay Cipryde,
To whom on knees two yonge folkes cryde
To ben hir help; but thus I leet hir lye,
And ferther in the temple I gan espye

That, in dispyte of Diane the chaste,
Ful many a bowe y-broke heng on the wal
Of maydens, suche as gunne hir tymes waste
In hir servyse; and peynted over al
Of many a story, of which I touche shal
A fewe, as of Calixte [9] and Athalaunte [10]
And many a mayde of which the name I wante;

Semyramus, Candace, [11] and Ercules,
Biblis, [12] Dido, Tisbe and Piramus,
Tristram, Isoude, [13] Paris, and Achilles,
Eleyne, [14] Cleopatre, and Troilus,
Silla, [15] and eek the moder of Romulus —
Alle these were peynted on that other syde,
And al hir love, and in what plyte they dyde.

Whan I was come ayen into the place
That I of spak, that was so swote and grene,
Forth welk I tho, my-selven to solace.
Tho was I war wher that ther sat a quene
That, as of light the somer-sonne shene
Passeth the sterre, right so over mesure
She fairer was than any creature.

[1] dressed-up. [2] murmur. [3] suffer. [4] Ovid's *Fasti*, I, 450. [5] scarcely. [6] content. [7] thin silk. [8] causes relief from hunger. [9] Callisto. [10] Atalanta, the fleet-footed. [11] An Indian queen who fascinated Alexander the Great. [12] Who loved vainly in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, IX. [13] Iseult. [14] Helen of Troy, or possibly Lancelot's Elaine. [15] Scylla of Megara, whom Minos would not have.

And in a launde, upon an hille of floures,
Was set this noble goddesse Nature;
Of braunches were hir halles and hir boures,
Y-wrought after hir craft and hir mesure;
Ne ther nas foul that cometh of engendrure,[1]
That they ne were prest[2] in hir presence,
To take hir doom and yeve hir audience.

For this was on seynt Valentynes day,
Whan every foul cometh ther to chese his make,
Of every kinde, that men thenke may;
And that so huge a noyse gan they make,
That erthe and see, and tree, and every lake
So ful was, that unnethe was ther space
For me to stonde, so ful was al the place.

And right as Aléyn, in the Pleynt of Kinde,[3]
Devyseth Nature of aray and face,
In swich aray men mighte[n] hir ther finde.
This noble emperesse, ful of grace,
Bad every foul to take his owne place,
As they were wont alwey fro yeer to yere,
Seynt Valentynes day, to stonden there.

That is to sey, the foules of ravyne[4]
Were hyest set; and than the foules smale,
That eten as hem nature wolde enclyne,
As worm, or thing of whiche I telle no tale;
But water-foul sat lowest in the dale;
And foul that liveth by seed sat on the grene,
And that so fele,[5] that wonder was to sene.

Ther mighte men the royal egle finde,
That with his sharpe look perceth the sonne;
And other egles of a lower kinde,
Of which that clerkes wel devysen conne.
Ther was the tyraunt with his fethres donne
And greye, I mene the goshauk, that doth pyne
To briddes for his outrageous ravyne.

The gentil faucon, that with his feet distreyneth[6]
The kinges hond; the hardy sperhauk[7] eke,
The quayles foo; the merlion[8] that peyneth
Him-self ful ofte the larke for to seke;
Ther was the douve, with hir eyen meke;
The jalous swan, ayens his deth that singeth;
The oule eek, that of dethe the bode bringeth;

[1] begetting. [2] ready. [3] Alanus de Insulis' *De Planctu Naturae* (c. 1170). [4] birds of prey. [5] many. [6] grasps. [7] sparrow-hawk. [8] the merlin.

The crane the geaunt,[9] with his trompes soune;
The theef, the chogh;[10] and eek the jangling[11] pye;
The scorning jay; the eles foo, the heroune;
The false lapwing, ful of trecherye;[12]
The stare,[13] that the counseyl can bewrye;[14]
The tame ruddok;[15] and the coward kyte;
The cok, that orloge is of thorpes lyte;[16]

The sparow, Venus sone; the nightingale,
That clepeth forth[17] the fresshe leves newe;
The swalow, mordrer of the foules[18] smale
That maken hony of floures fresshe of hewe;
The wedded turtel, with hir herte trewe;
The pecok, with his aungels fethres brighte;
The fesaunt, scorner of the cok by nighte;

The waker[19] goos; the cukkow ever unkinde;[20]
The popinjay, ful of delicasye;[21]
The drake, stroyer of his owne kinde;
The stork, the wreker of avouterye;[22]
The hote cormeraunt of glotonye;
The raven wys, the crow with vois of care;
The throstel olde; the frosty[23] feldefare.

What shulde I seyn? Of foules every kinde
That in this worlde han fethres and stature,
Men mighten in that place assembled finde
Before the noble goddesse Nature.
And everich of hem did his besy cure
Benignely to chese or for to take,
By hir acord, his formel[24] or his make.

But to the poynt—Nature held on hir honde
A formel egle, of shap the gentileste
That ever she among hir werkes fonde,
The most benigne and the goodlieste;
In hir was every vertu at his reste,
So ferforth,[25] that Nature hir-self had blisse
To loke on hir, and ofte hir bek to kisse.

Nature, the vicaire of th'almyghty lorde,
That hoot, cold, hevy, light, [and] moist and dreye
Hath knit by even noumbre of acorde,
In esy vois began to speke and seye,
'Foules, tak hede of my sentence, I preye,

[9] giant. [10] chough, crow. [11] chattering. [12] because she misleads those seeking her nest. [13] starling. [14] that tells tales. [15] robin redbreast. [16] the timepiece of little villages. [17] announces. [18] Another reading is *flyes*. [19] watchful. [20] unnatural (about its eggs). [21] wantonness. [22] avenger of adultery. [23] Because he comes in the winter. [24] the female of a bird of prey. [25] To such a degree.

And, for your ese, in furthering of your nede,
As faste as I may speke, I wol me spede.

Ye know wel how, seynt Valentynes day,
By my statut and through my governaunce,
Ye come for to chese — and flee your way —
Your makes, as I prik yow with plesaunce.
But natheles, my rightful ordenaunce
May I not lete, for al this world to winne,
That he that most is worthy shal beginne.

The tercel[1] egle, as that ye knowen wel,
The foul royal above yow in degree,
The wyse and worthy, secree, trewe as stel,
The which I formed have, as ye may see,
In every part as hit best lyketh me,
Hit nedeth noght his shap yow to devyse,
He shal first chese and speken in his gyse.[2]

And after him, by order shul ye chese,
After your kinde, everich as yow lyketh,
And, as your hap is, shul ye winne or lese;
But which of yow that love most entryketh,[3]
God sende him hir that sorest for him syketh.'
And therwith-al the tercel gan she calle,
And seyde, 'My sone, the choys is to thee falle.

But natheles, in this condicioun
Mot[4] be the choys of everich that is here,
That she agree to his eleccioun,
Who-so he be that shulde been hir fere;[5]
This is our usage alwey, fro yeer to yere;
And who so may at this time have his grace,
In blisful tyme he com in-to this place.'

With hed enclyned and with ful humble chere
This royal tercel spak and taried nought;
'Unto my sovereyn lady, and noght my fere,
I chese, and chese with wille and herte and thought,
The formel on your hond so wel y-wrought,
Whos I am al and ever wol hir serve,
Do what hir list, to do me live or sterve.

Beseching hir of mercy and of grace,
As she that is my lady sovereyne;
Or let me dye present in this place.
For certes, long may I not live in peyne;
For in myn herte is corven[6] every veyne;
Having reward[7] [al] only to my trouthe,
My dere herte, have on my wo som routhe.

And if that I to hir be founde untrewe,
Disobeysaunt, or wilful negligent,
Avauntour,[8] or in proces[9] love a newe,
I pray to you this be my jugement,
That with these foules I be al to-rent,
That ilke day that ever she me finde
To hir untrewe, or in my gilte unkinde.

And sin that noon loveth hir so wel as I,
Al be she never of love me behette,[10]
Than oghte she be myn thourgh hir mercy,
For other bond can I noon on hir knette.[11]
For never, for ne wo, ne shal I lette[12]
To serven hir, how fer so that she wende;
Sey what yow list, my tale is at an ende.'

Right as the fresshe, rede rose newe
Ayen the somer-sonne coloured is,
Right so for shame al wexen gan the hewe
Of this formel, whan she herde al this;
She neyther answerde 'Wel,' ne seyde amis.
So sore abasshed was she, til that Nature
Seyde, 'Doghter, drede yow noght, I yow assure.'[13]

Another tercel egle spak anoon,
Of lower kinde, and seyde, 'That shal not be;
I love hir bet than ye do, by seynt John,
Or atte leste I love hir as wel as ye;
And lenger have served hir, in my degree,
And if she shulde have loved for long loving,
To me allone had been the guerdoning.[14]

I dar eek seye, if she me finde fals,
Unkinde, jangler, or rebel any wyse,
Or jalous, do me hongen by the hals!
And but I bere me in hir servyse,
As well as that my wit can me suffyse,
Fro poynt to poynt, hir honour for to save,
Tak she my life, and al the good[15] I have.'

The thridde tercel egle answerde tho,[16]
'Now, sirs, ye seen the litel leyser[17] here;
For every foul cryeth out to been a-go
Forth with his make, or with his lady dere;
And eek Nature hir-self ne wol nought here,
For tarying here, noght half that I wolde seye;
And but I speke, I mot for sorwe deye.

Of long servyse avaunte I me no-thing,
But as possible is me to dye to-day
For wo, as he that hath ben languisshing

[1] the male of a bird of prey — perhaps so called because a third smaller than the female. [2] way. [3] pesters. [4] must. [5] mate. [6] cut. [7] regard. [8] boaster. [9] in time. [10] promised. [11] knit. [12] cease. [13] protect. [14] rewarding. [15] goods. [16] then. [17] leisure.

Thise twenty winter, and wel happen may
A man may serven bet and more to pay[1]
In half a yere, al-though hit were no more,
Than som man doth that hath served ful yore.

I ne say not this by[2] me, for I ne can
Do no servyse that may my lady plese;
But I dar seyn, I am hir trewest man
As to my dome, and feynest wolde hir ese;
At shorte wordes, til that deth me sese,
I wol ben hires, whether I wake or winke,
And trewe in al that herte may bethinke.'

Of al my lyf, sin that day I was born,
So gentil plee in love or other thing
Ne herde never no man me beforn,
Who[-so] that hadde leyser and cunning
For to reherse hir chere and hir speking;
And from the morwe gan this speche laste
Til doumward drow the sonne wonder faste.

The noyse of foules for to ben delivered
So loude rong, 'Have doon and let us wende!'
That wel wende[3] I the wode had al to-shivered.
'Come of!'[4] they cryde, 'allas! ye wil us shende!
When shal your cursed pleding have an ende?
How shulde a juge eyther party leve,[5]
For yee or nay, with-outen any preve?'

The goos, the cokkow, and the doke also
So cryden 'Kek, kek!' 'Kukkow!' 'Quek, quek!' hye,
That thorgh myn eres the noyse wente tho.
The goos seyde, 'Al this nis not worth a flye!
But I can shape hereof a remedye,
And I wol sey my verdit faire and swythe
For water-foul, who-so be wrooth or blythe.'

'And I for worm-foul,' seyde the fool cukkow,
'For I wol, of myn owne auctoritè,
For comune spede, take the charge now,
For to delivere us is gret charitè.'
'Ye may abyde a whyle yet, parde!'
Seide the turtel, 'if hit be your wille
A wight may speke, him were as good be stille.[6]

I am a seed-foul, oon the unworthieste,
That wot I wel, and litel of kunninge;
But bet is that a wightes tonge reste
Than entremeten him[7] of such doinge
Of which he neyther rede can nor singe.
And who-so doth, ful foule himself acloyeth,[8]
For office uncommitted ofte anoyeth.'[9]

Nature, which that alway had an ere
To murmour of the lewednes behinde,
With facound[10] voys seide, 'Hold your tonges there!
And I shal sone, I hope, a counseyl finde
You to delivere, and fro this noyse unbinde;
I juge, of every folk men shal oon calle
To seyn the verdit for you foules alle.'

Assented were to this conclusioun
The briddes alle; and foules of ravyne
Han chosen first, by pleyn electioun,
The tercelet of the faucon, to diffyne
Al hir sentence,[11] and as him list, termyne;[12]
And to Nature him gonnen[13] to presente,
And she accepteth him with glad entente.

The tercelet seide than in this manere:
'Ful hard were hit to preve hit by resoun
Who loveth best this gentil formel here;
For everich hath swich replicacioun[14]
That noon by skilles[15] may be broght a-doun;
I can not seen that arguments avayle;
Than semeth hit ther moste be batayle.'

'Al redy!' quod[16] these egles tercels tho.
'Nay, sirs!' quod he, 'if that I dorste it seye,
Ye doon me wrong, my tale is not y-do!
For sirs, ne taketh noght a-gref,[17] I preye,
It may noght gon, as ye wolde, in this weye;
Oure is the voys that han the charge in honde,
And to the juges dome ye moten stonde;

And therfor pees! I seye, as to my wit,
Me wolde thinke[18] how that the worthieste
Of knighthode, and lengest hath used hit,[19]
Moste of estat, of blode the gentileste,
Were sittingest[20] for hir, if that hir leste;
And of these three she wot hir-self, I trowe,
Which that he be, for hit is light to knowe.'

[1] please. [2] about. [3] thought. [4] Hurry up. [5] believe. [6] if a man is to speak after your fashion, he might as well be silent. [7] meddle. [8] overburdens. [9] A proverb; cf. "Proffered service stinketh." [10] fluent, ready. [11] their sentiments. [12] determine. [13] proceeded. [14] repartee. [15] reasons. [16] quoth. [17] in bad part. [18] It would seem to me. [19] Who has been longest a good knight. [20] most suitable.

The water-foules han her hedes leyd
Togeder, and of short avysement,
Whan everich had his large golee[1] seyd,
They seyden sothly, al by oon assent,
How that 'the goos, with hir facounde gent,[2]
That so desyreth to pronounce our nede,
Shal telle our tale,' and preyde 'God hir spede.'

And for these water-foules tho began
The goos to speke, and in hir cakelinge
She seyde, 'Pees! now tak kepe[3] every man,
And herkeneth which a[4] reson I shal bringe;
My wit is sharp, I love no taryinge;
I seye, I rede[5] him, though he were my brother,
But she wol love him, lat him love another!'

'Lo here! a parfit reson of a goos!'
Quod the sperhauk; 'never mot she thee![6]
Lo, swich hit is to have a tonge loos!
Now parde, fool, yet were hit bet for thee
Hâve holde thy pees, than shewed thy nycete![7]
Hit lyth not in his wit nor in his wille,
But sooth is seyd, "a fool can noght be stille."'

The laughter aroos of gentil foules alle,
And right anoon the seed-foul chosen hadde
The turtel trewe, and gunne hir to hem calle,
And preyden hir to seye the sothe sadde
Of this matere, and asked what she radde;
And she answerde, that pleynly hir entente
She wolde shewe, and sothly what she mente.

'Nay, God forbede a lover shulde chaunge!'
The turtel seyde, and wex for shame al reed;
'Thogh that his lady ever-more be straunge,
Yet let him serve hir ever, til he be deed;
For sothe, I preyse noght the gooses reed;
For thogh she deyed, I wolde none other make,
I wol ben hires, til that the deth me take.'

[1] gobble, lit. mouthful. [2] gentle eloquence. [3] pay heed. [4] what sort of. [5] advise. [6] thrive. [7] folly.

'Wel bourded!'[8] quod the doke, 'by my hat!
That men shulde alwey loven, causeles,
Who can a reson finde or wit in that?
Daunceth he mury that is mirtheles?
Who shulde recche of that is reccheles?
Ye, quek!' yit quod the doke, ful wel and faire,
'There been mo sterres, God wot, than a paire!'

'Now fy, cherl!' quod the gentil tercelet,
'Out of the dunghil com that word ful right,
Thou canst noght see which thing is wel be-set:
Thou farest by love as oules doon by light,
The day hem blent,[9] ful wel they see by night;
Thy kind is of so lowe a wrechednesse,
That what love is, thou canst nat see ne gesse.'

Tho gan the cukkow putte him forth in prees
For foul that eteth worm, and seide blyve,[10]
'So I,' quod he, 'may have my make[11] in pees,
I recche not how longe that ye stryve;
Lat ech of hem be soleyn[12] al hir lyve,
This is my reed, sin they may not acorde;
This shorte lesson nedeth noght recorde.'[13]

'Ye! have the glotoun fild ynogh his paunche,
Than are we wel!' seyde the merlioun;
'Thou mordrer of the heysugge[14] on the braunche
That broghte thee forth, thou rewthelees glotoun!
Live thou soleyn,[15] wormes corrupcioun![16]
For no fors is of lakke of thy nature;[17]
Go, lewed be thou, whyl the world may dure!'[18]

'Now pees,' quod Nature, 'I comaunde here;
For I have herd al your opinioun,
And in effect yet be we never the nere;[19]
But fynally, this is my conclusioun,
That she hir-self shal han the eleccioun

[8] jested. [9] blindeth. [10] promptly. [11] mate. [12] lone. [13] to be put on record. [14] haysuck, hedge-sparrow. [15] solitary. [16] Because his diet was worms. [17] It would not matter if there were a dearth of such as thou. [18] endure. [19] nearer.

Of whom hir list, who-so be wrooth or blythe,
Him that she cheest,[1] he shal hir have as swythe.[2]

For sith hit may not here discussed be
Who loveth hir best, as seide the tercelet,
Than wol I doon hir this favour, that she
Shal have right him on whom hir herte is set,
And he hir that his herte hath on hir knet.
This juge I, Nature, for I may not lyë;
To noon estat I have non other yë.[3]

But as for counseyl for to chese a make,
If hit were reson, certes, than wolde I
Counseyle yow the royal tercel take,
As seide the tercelet ful skilfully,
As for the gentilest and most worthy,
Which I have wroght so wel to my plesaunce;
That to yow oghte been a suffisaunce.'

With dredful [4] vois the formel hir answerde,
'My rightful lady, goddesse of Nature,
Soth is that I am ever under your yerde,[5]
Lyk as is everiche other creature,
And moot be youres whyl my lyf may dure;
And therfor graunteth me my firste bone,
And myn entente I wol yow sey right sone.'

'I graunte it you,' quod she; and right anoon
This formel egle spak in this degree,
'Almighty quene, unto this yeer be doon
I aske respit for to avysen me.
And after that to have my choys al free;
This al and som [6] that I wolde speke and seye;
Ye gete no more, al-though ye do me deye.

I wol noght serven Venus ne Cupyde
For sothe as yet, by no manere wey.'
'Now sin it may non other wyse betyde,'
Quod tho Nature, 'here is no more to sey;
Than wolde I that these foules were a-wey
Ech with his make, for tarying lenger here'—
And seyde hem thus, as ye shul after here.

'To you speke I, ye tercelets,' quod Nature,
'Beth of good herte and serveth, alle three;
A yeer is not so longe to endure,

[1] chooseth. [2] forthwith. [3] eye. [4] deferential.
[5] rod, governance. [6] This is quite all.

And ech of yow peyne him, in his degree,
For to do wel; for, God wot, quit is she
Fro yow this yeer; what after so befalle,
This entremes [7] is dressed for you alle.'

And whan this werk al broght was to an ende,
To every foule Nature yaf his make
By even acorde, and on hir wey they wende.
A! lord! the blisse and joye that they make!
For ech of hem gan other in winges take,
And with hir nekkes ech gan other winde,
Thanking alwey the noble goddesse of kinde.

But first were chosen foules for to singe,
As yeer by yere was alwey hir usaunce
To singe a roundel at hir departinge,
To do Nature honour and plesaunce.
The note, I trowe, maked was in Fraunce;
The wordes were swich as ye may heer finde,
The nexte vers, as I now have in minde.

Qui bien aime a tard oublie.[8]

'Now welcom somer, with thy sonne softe,
That hast this wintres weders overshake,
And driven awey the longe nightes blake!

Seynt Valentyn, that art ful hy onlofte,
Thus singen smale foules for thy sake:
Now welcom somer, with thy sonne softe,
That hast this wintres weders over-shake.

Wel han they cause for to gladen ofte,
Sith ech of hem recovered hath his make;
Ful blisful may they singen whan they wake,
Now welcom somer, with thy sonne softe,
That hast this wintres weders over-shake,
And driven awey the longe nightes blake.'

And with the showting, whan hir song was do,
That foules maden at her flight a-way,
I wook, and other bokes took me to
To rede upon, and yet I rede alway;
I hope, y-wis, to rede so som day
That I shal mete som thing for to fare
The bet; and thus to rede I nil not spare.

[7] intermission; between-course.
[8] Who loves truly forgets late.

TROILUS AND CRISEYDE

BOOK I

1. The double sorwe of Troilus to tellen,
That was the king Priamus sone of Troye,
In lovinge, how his aventures fellen
Fro wo to wele, and after out of joye,
My purpos is, er that I parte fro ye.
Thesiphone, thou help me for t'endyte
Thise woful vers, that wepen as I wryte!

2. To thee clepe I, thou goddesse of torment,
Thou cruel Furie, sorwing ever in peyne;
Help me, that am the sorwful instrument
That helpeth lovers, as I can, to pleyne!
For wel sit[1] it, the sothe for to seyne,
A woful wight to han a drery fere,[2]
And, to a sorwful tale, a sory chere.

3. For I, that god of Loves servaunts serve,
Ne dar to Love, for myn unlyklinesse,
Preyen for speed, al sholde I therfor sterve,
So fer am I fro his help in derknesse;
But nathelees, if this may doon gladnesse
To any lover, and his cause avayle,
Have he my thank, and myn be this travayle!

4. But ye loveres that bathen in gladnesse,
If any drope of pitee in yow be,
Remembreth yow on passed hevinesse
That ye han felt, and on the adversitee
Of othere folk, and thenketh how that ye
Han felt that Love dorste yow displese;
Or ye han wonne him with to greet an ese.

5. And preyeth for hem that ben in the cas
Of Troilus, as ye may after here,
That love hem bringe in hevene to solas;
And eek for me preyeth to God so dere,
That I have might to shewe, in som manere,
Swich peyne and wo as Loves folk endure,
In Troilus unsely[3] aventure.

6. And biddeth eek for hem that been despeyred
In love, that never nil recovered be,
And eek for hem that falsly been apeyred[4]
Thorugh wikked tonges, be it he or she;
Thus biddeth God, for his benignitee,
To graunte hem sone out of this world to pace,
That been despeyred out of Loves grace.

7. And biddeth eek for hem that been at ese,
That God hem graunte ay good perseveraunce,
And sende hem might hir ladies so to plese,
That it to Love be worship and plesaunce.
For so hope I my soule best avaunce,
To preye for hem that Loves servaunts be,
And wryte hir wo, and live in charitee.

8. And for to have of hem compassioun
As though I were hir owene brother dere.
Now herkeneth with a gode entencioun,
For now wol I gon streight to my matere,
In whiche he may the double sorwes here
Of Troilus, in loving of Criseyde,
And how that she forsook him er she deyde.

9. It is wel wist, how that the Grekes stronge
In armes with a thousand shippes wente
To Troye-wardes, and the citee longe
Assegeden neigh ten yeer er they stente,
And, in diverse wyse and oon entente,
The ravisshing to wreken of Eleyne,
By Paris doon, they wroughten al hir peyne.

10. Now fil it so, that in the toun ther was
Dwellinge a lord of greet auctoritee,
A gret devyn that cleped was Calkas,
That in science so expert was, that he
Knew wel that Troye sholde destroyed be,
By answere of his god, that highte thus,
Daun Phebus or Apollo Delphicus.

[1] is becoming. [2] companion. [3] hapless. [4] disparaged.

11. So whan this Calkas knew by calculinge,
And eek by answere of this Appollo,
That Grekes sholden swich a peple bringe
Thorugh which that Troye moste been fordo,
He caste [1] anoon out of the toun to go;
For wel wiste he, by sort,[2] that Troye sholde
Destroyed been, ye, wolde who-so nolde.[3]

12. For which, for to departen softely
Took purpos ful this forknowinge wyse,[4]
And to the Grekes ost ful prively
He stal [5] anoon; and they, in curteys wyse,
Him deden bothe worship and servyse,
In trust that he hath conning hem to rede
In every peril which that is to drede.

13. The noyse up roos, whan it was first aspyed,
Thorugh al the toun, and generally was spoken,
That Calkas traytor fled was, and allyed
With hem of Grece; and casten to ben wroken [6]
On him that falsly hadde his feith so broken;
And seyden, he and al his kin at ones
Ben worthy for to brennen, fel [7] and bones.

14. Now hadde Calkas left, in this meschaunce,
Al unwist [8] of this false and wikked dede,
His doughter, which that was in gret penaunce,
For of hir lyf she was ful sore in drede,
As she that niste what was best to rede;[9]
For bothe a widowe was she, and allone
Of any freend to whom she dorste hir mone.

15. Criseyde was this lady name a-right;
As to my dome, in al Troyes citee
Nas noon so fair, for passing every wight
So aungellyk was hir natyf beautee,
That lyk a thing immortal semed she,
As doth an hevenish parfit creature,
That doun were sent in scorning of nature.

16. This lady, which that al-day herde at ere
Hir fadres shame, his falsnesse and tresoun,
Wel nigh out of hir wit for sorwe and fere,
In widewes habit large of samit broun,
On knees she fil biforn Ector a-doun;
With pitous voys, and tendrely wepinge,
His mercy bad, hir-selven excusinge.

17. Now was this Ector pitous of nature,
And saw that she was sorwfully bigoon,[10]
And that she was so fair a creature;
Of his goodnesse he gladed hir anoon,
And seyde, 'Lat your fadres treson goon
Forth with mischaunce, and ye your-self, in joye,
Dwelleth with us, whyl you good list, in Troye.

18. And al th'onour that men may doon yow have,
As ferforth as your fader dwelled here,
Ye shul han, and your body shal men save,
As fer as I may ought enquere or here.'
And she him thonked with ful humble chere,
And ofter wolde, and it hadde ben his wille,
And took hir leve, and hoom, and held hir stille.

19. And in hir hous she abood with swich meynee [11]
As to hir honour nede was to holde;
And whyl she was dwellinge in that citee,
Kepte hir estat, and bothe of yonge and olde
Ful wel beloved, and wel men of hir tolde.
But whether that she children hadde or noon,
I rede it nought; therfore I lete it goon.

20. The thinges fellen, as they doon of werre,
Bitwixen hem of Troye and Grekes ofte;
For som day boughten they of Troye it derre,
And eft [12] the Grekes founden no thing softe
The folk of Troye; and thus fortune onlofte,
And under eft, gan hem to wheelen bothe
After hir cours, ay whyl they were wrothe.

21. But how this toun com to destruccioun
Ne falleth nought to purpos me to telle;
For it were here a long digressioun
Fro my matere, and yow to longe dwelle.[13]
But the Troyane gestes, as they felle,
In Omer, or in Dares,[14] or in Dyte,[15]
Who-so that can, may rede hem as they wryte.

[1] planned. [2] divination. [3] in spite of those for or against. [4] sage. [5] stole. [6] they planned to be avenged. [7] skin. [8] unknowing. [9] to plan. [10] in distress. [11] retinue. [12] again. [13] delay, bore, too long. [14] Dares Phrygius. [15] Dictys Cretensis.

22. But though that Grekes hem of Troye shetten,[1]
And hir citee bisegede al a-boute,
Hir olde usage wolde they not letten,
As for to honoure hir goddes ful devoute;
But aldermost in honoure, out of doute,
They hadde a relik hight Palladion,
That was hir trist a-boven everichon.

23. And so bifel, whan comen was the tyme
Of Aperil, whan clothed is the mede
With newe grene, of lusty Ver[2] the pryme,
And swote smellen floures whyte and rede,
In sondry wyses shewed, as I rede,
The folk of Troye hir observaunces olde,
Palladiones feste for to holde.

24. And to the temple, in al hir beste wyse,
In general, ther wente many a wight,
To herknen of Palladion the servyse;
And namely, so many a lusty knight,
So many a lady fresh and mayden bright,
Ful wel arayed, bothe moste and leste,
Ye, bothe for the seson and the feste.

25. Among thise othere folk was Criseyda,
In widewes habite blak; but nathelees,
Right as our firste lettre is now an A,[3]
In beautee first so stood she, makelees;[4]
Hir godly looking gladede al the prees.
Nas never seyn thing to ben preysed derre,
Nor under cloude blak so bright a sterre

26. As was Criseyde, as folk seyde everichoon
That hir bihelden in hir blake wede;
And yet she stood ful lowe and stille alloon,
Bihinden othere folk, in litel brede,[5]
And neigh the dore, ay under shames drede,
Simple of atyr, and debonaire of chere,
With ful assured loking and manere.

27. This Troilus, as he was wont to gyde
His yonge knightes, ladde hem up and doun
In thilke large temple on every syde,
Biholding ay the ladyes of the toun,
Now here, now there, for no devocioun
Hadde he to noon, to reven him his reste,
But gan to preyse and lakken[6] whom him leste.

28. And in his walk ful fast he gan to wayten[7]
If knight or squyer of his companye
Gan for to syke[8] or lete his eyen bayten[9]
On any woman that he coude aspye;
He wolde smyle, and holden it folye,
And seye him thus, 'God wot, she slepeth softe
For love of thee, whan thou tornest ful ofte!

29. 'I have herd told, pardieux, of your livinge,
Ye lovers, and your lewede observaunces,
And which a labour folk han in winninge
Of love, and, in the keping, which doutaunces;
And whan your preye is lost, wo and penaunces;
O verrey foles! nyce and blinde be ye;
Ther nis not oon can war by other be.'

30. And with that word he gan cast up the browe,
Ascaunces,[10] 'Lo! is this nought wysly spoken?'
At which the god of love gan loken rowe[11]
Right for despyt, and shoop for to ben wroken;[12]
He kidde[13] anoon his bowe nas not broken;
For sodeynly he hit him at the fulle;
And yet as proud a pekok can he pulle.[14]

31. O blinde world! O blinde entencioun!
How ofte falleth al th'effect contraire
Of surquidrye[15] and foul presumpcioun;
For caught is proud, and caught is debonaire.
This Troilus is clomben on the staire,
And litel weneth that he moot descenden.
But al-day fayleth thing that foles wenden.

32. As proude Bayard[16] ginneth for to skippe
Out of the wey, so priketh him his corn,
Til he a lash have of the longe whippe,
Than thenketh he, 'Though I praunce al biforn
First in the trays, ful fat and newe shorn,
Yet am I but an hors, and horses lawe
I moot endure, and with my feres drawe.'

1 shut up. 2 the spring.
3 Alluding to Richard II's queen, Anne.
4 peerless. 5 space. 6 criticize.
7 take heed. 8 sigh. 9 feed. 10 As if to say.
11 cross. 12 determined to wreak vengeance.
13 showed. 14 pluck as proud a bird.
15 over-confidence. 16 a bay horse.

33. So ferde it by this fers and proude knight;
Though he a worthy kinges sone were,
And wende no-thing hadde had swiche might
Ayens his wil that sholde his herte stere,[1]
Yet with a look his herte wex a-fere,[2]
That he, that now was most in pryde above,
Wex sodeynly most subget un-to love.

34. For-thy ensample taketh of this man,
Ye wyse, proude, and worthy folkes alle,
To scornen Love, which that so sone can
The freedom of your hertes to him thralle;
For ever it was, and ever it shal bifalle,
That Love is he that alle thing may binde;
For may no man for-do the lawe of kinde.

35. That this be sooth, hath preved[3] and doth yit;
For this trowe I ye knowen, alle or some,
Men reden not that folk han gretter wit
Than they that han be most with love y-nome;[4]
And strengest folk ben therwith overcome,
The worthiest and grettest of degree;
This was, and is, and yet men shal it see.

36. And trewelich it sit wel to be so;
For alderwysest han ther-with ben plesed;
And they that han ben aldermost in wo,
With love han been comforted most and esed;
And ofte it hath the cruel herte apesed,
And worthy folk maad worthier of name,
And causeth most to dreden vyce and shame.

37. Now sith it may not goodly be withstonde,
And is a thing so vertuous in kinde,
Refuseth not to Love for to be bonde,
Sin as him-selven list, he may yow binde.
The yerde is bet that bowen wole and winde
Than that that brest;[5] and therfor I yow rede
To folwen him that so wel can yow lede.

38. But for to tellen forth in special
As of this kinges sone of which I tolde,
And leten other thing collateral,
Of him thenke I my tale for to holde,
Bothe of his joye, and of his cares colde;
And al his werk, as touching this matere,
For I it gan, I wil ther-to refere.[6]

[1] stir. [2] afeared. [3] hath been proved. [4] taken. [5] breaketh. [6] return.

39. With-inne the temple he wente him forth pleyinge,
This Troilus, of every wight aboute,
On this lady and now on that lokinge,
Wher-so she were of toune, or of withoute:
And up-on cas bifel, that thorugh a route
His eye perced, and so depe it wente,
Til on Criseyde it smoot, and ther it stente.

40. And sodeynly he wex ther-with astoned,
And gan hire bet biholde in thrifty[7] wyse:
'O mercy, God!' thoughte he, 'wher hastow woned,[8]
That art so fair and goodly to devyse?'
Ther-with his herte gan to sprede and ryse,
And softe sighed, lest men mighte him here,
And caughte a-yein his firste pleyinge chere.

41. She nas not with the leste of hir stature,
But alle hir limes so wel answeringe
Weren to womanhode, that creature
Was never lasse mannish in seminge.
And eek the pure wyse of here meninge
Shewede wel,[9] that men might in hir gesse
Honour, estat,[10] and wommanly noblesse.

42. To Troilus right wonder wel with-alle
Gan for to lyke hir mening and hir chere,
Which somdel deynous[11] was, for she leet falle
Hir look a lite a-side, in swich manere,
Ascaunces,[12] 'What! may I not stonden here?'
And after that hir loking gan she lighte,[13]
That never thoughte him seen so good a sighte.

43. And of hir look in him ther gan to quiken
So greet desir, and swich affecciouu,
That in his hertes botme gan to stiken
Of hir his fixe and depe impressioun:
And though he erst hadde poured up and doun,
He was tho glad his hornes in to shrinke;
Unnethes wiste he how to loke or winke.

44. Lo, he that leet[14] him-selven so konninge,
And scorned hem that loves peynes dryen,[15]
Was ful unwar that love hadde his dwellinge

[7] discreet. [8] dwelt.
[9] The very nature of her disposition was apparent.
[10] rank. [11] disdainful. [12] As much as to say.
[13] make cheerful. [14] considered. [15] endure.

With-inne the subtile stremes of hir yën;
That sodeynly him thoughte he felte dyen,
Right with hir look, the spirit in his herte;
Blessed be love, that thus can folk converte!

45. She, this in blak, lykinge to Troilus
Over alle thing, he stood for to biholde;
Ne his desir, ne wherfor he stood thus,
He neither chere made, ne worde tolde;
But from a-fer, his maner for to holde,
On other thing his look som-tyme he caste,
And eft on hir, whyl that servyse laste.

46. And after this, not fulliche al awhaped,[1]
Out of the temple al esiliche he wente,
Repentinge him that he hadde ever y-japed
Of loves folk, lest fully the descente
Of scorn fille on him-self; but, what he mente,
Lest it were wist on any maner syde,[2]
His wo he gan dissimulen and hyde.

47. Whan he was fro the temple thus departed,
He streyght anoon un-to his paleys torneth,
Right with hir look thurgh-shoten and thurgh-darted,
Al feyneth he in lust that he sojorneth;
And al his chere and speche also he borneth;[3]
And ay, of loves servants every whyle,
Him-self to wrye,[4] at hem he gan to smyle.

48. And seyde, 'Lord, so ye live al in lest,[5]
Ye loveres! for the conningest of yow,
That serveth most ententiflich and best,
Him tit[6] as often harm ther-of as prow;[7]
Your hyre is quit ayein, ye, God wot how!
Nought wel for wel, but scorn for good servyse;
In feith, your ordre is ruled in good wyse!

49. In noun-certeyn[8] ben alle your observaunces,
But it a sely fewe poyntes be;
Ne no-thing asketh so grete attendaunces
As doth your lay,[9] and that knowe alle ye;
But that is not the worste, as mote I thee;
But, tolde I yow the worste poynt, I leve,
Al seyde I sooth, ye wolden at me greve!

50. But tak this: that ye loveres ofte eschuwe
Or elles doon of good entencioun,
Ful ofte thy lady wole it misconstrue,
And deme it harm in hir opinioun;
And yet if she, for other enchesoun,[10]
Be wrooth, than shalt thou han a groyn[11] anoon:
Lord! wel is him that may be of yow oon!'

51. But for al this, whan that he say[12] his tyme,
He held his pees, non other bote him gayned;[13]
For love began his fetheres so to lyme,[14]
That wel unnethe[15] un-to his folk he feyned
That othere besye nedes him destrayned;
For wo was him, that what to doon he niste,
But bad his folk to goon wher that hem liste.

52. And whan that he in chaumbre was allone,
He doun up-on his beddes feet him sette,
And first he gan to syke, and eft to grone,
And thoughte ay on hir so, with-outen lette,
That, as he sat and wook, his spirit mette
That he hir saw a[16] temple, and al the wyse
Right of hir loke, and gan it newe avyse.

53. Thus gan he make a mirour of his minde,
In which he saugh al hoolly hir figure;
And that he wel coude in his herte finde,
It was to him a right good aventure
To love swich oon, and if he dide his cure
To serven hir, yet mighte he falle in grace,
Or elles, for oon of hir servaunts pace:

54. Imagininge that travaille nor grame[17]
Ne mighte, for so goodly oon, be lorn
As she; ne him for his desir no shame,[18]
Al were it wist, but in prys and up-born[19]
Of alle lovers wel more than biforn;
Thus argumented he in his ginninge,
Ful unavysed of his wo cominge.

[1] bewildered. [2] anyhow, anywhere. [3] burnishes, brightens. [4] conceal. [5] pleasure. [6] betideth. [7] advantage. [8] uncertainty. [9] faith, creed.
[10] occasion. [11] rebuff. [12] saw.
[13] no other remedy profited him. [14] As with bird-lime.
[15] with great difficulty. [16] in the. [17] pain.
[18] Supply "come upon" (with object *him*).
[19] Supply "would he be."

55. Thus took he purpos loves craft to suwe,[1]
And thoughte he wolde werken prively,
First, to hyden his desir in muwe[2]
From every wight y-born, al-outrely,
But he mighte ought recovered be therby:
Remembring him, that love to wyde y-blowe
Yelt[3] bittre fruyt, though swete seed be sowe.

56. And over al this, yet muchel more he thoughte
What for to speke, and what to holden inne,
And what to arten[4] hir to love he soughte,
And on a song anoon-right to biginne,
And gan loude on his sorwe for to winne;
For with good hope he gan fully assente
Criseyde for to love, and nought repente.

57. And of his song nought only the sentence,
As writ myn autour called Lollius,[5]
But pleynly, save our tonges difference,
I dar wel sayn, in al that Troilus
Seyde in his song, lo! every word right thus
As I shal seyn; and who-so list it here,
Lo! next this vers, he may it finden here.

CANTUS TROILI

58. 'If no love is, O God, what fele I so?
And if love is, what thing and whiche is he?
If love be good, from whennes comth my wo?
If it be wikke, a wonder thinketh me,
When every torment and adversitee
That cometh of him, may to me savory thinke;
For ay thurste I, the more that I it drinke.

59. And if that at myn owene lust I brenne,
Fro whennes cometh my wailing and my pleynte?
If harme agree me, wher-to pleyne I thenne?
I noot, ne why unwery that I feynte.
O quike deeth! O swete harm so queynte!
How may of thee in me swich quantitee,
But-if that I consente that it be?

60. And if that I consente, I wrongfully
Compleyne, y-wis; thus possed[6] to and fro,
Al sterelees[7] with-inne a boot am I
A-mid the see, by-twixen windes two,
That in contrarie stonden ever-mo.
Allas! what is this wonder maladye?
For hete of cold, for cold of hete, I dye.'

61. And to the god of love thus seyde he
With pitous voys, 'O lord, now youres is
My spirit, which that oughte youres be.
Yow thanke I, lord, that han me brought to this;
But whether goddesse or womman, y-wis,
She be, I noot, which that ye do me serve;
But as hir man I wole ay live and sterve.

62. Ye stonden in hire eyen mightily,
As in a place un-to your vertu digne;
Wherfore, lord, if my servyse or I
May lyke yow, so beth to me benigne;
For myn estat royal here I resigne
In-to hir hond, and with ful humble chere
Bicome hir man, as to my lady dere.'

63. In him ne deyned sparen blood royal
The fyr of love, wher-fro God me blesse,
Ne him forbar in no degree, for al
His vertu or his excellent prowesse;
But held him as his thral lowe in distresse,
And brend him so in sondry wyse ay newe,
That sixty tyme a day he lost his hewe.

64. So muche, day by day, his owene thought,
For lust to hir, gan quiken and encrese,
That every other charge he sette at nought;
For-thy ful ofte, his hote fyr to cese,
To seen hir goodly look he gan to prese;
For ther-by to ben esed wel he wende,
And ay the neer[8] he was, the more he brende.

65. For ay the neer the fyr, the hotter is,
This, trowe I, knoweth al this companye.
But were he fer or neer, I dar seye this,
By night or day, for wysdom or folye,
His herte, which that is his brestes yë,
Was ay on hir, that fairer was to sene
Than ever was Eleyne or Polixene.

[1] follow.
[2] secret; literally, "hawk's moulting place."
[3] Yieldeth. [4] incite.
[5] A puzzling name — here for Petrarch, whose 88th sonnet follows; elsewhere for Boccaccio. See Skeat's note.
[6] pushed, tossed. [7] rudderless. [8] higher.

66. Eek of the day ther passed nought an houre
That to him-self a thousand tyme he seyde,
'Good goodly, to whom serve I and laboure,
As I best can, now wolde God, Criseyde,
Ye wolden on me rewe er that I deyde!
My dere herte, allas! myn hele[1] and hewe
And lyf is lost, but ye wole on me rewe.'

67. Alle othere dredes weren from him fledde,
Bothe of th'assege and his savacioun;
Ne in him desyr noon othere fownes[2] bredde
But arguments to this conclusioun,
That she on him wolde han compassioun,
And he to be hir man, whyl he may dure;
Lo, here his lyf, and from the deeth his cure!

68. The sharpe shoures felle[3] of armes preve,
That Ector or his othere bretheren diden,
Ne made him only ther-fore ones meve;
And yet was he, wher-so men wente or riden,
Founde oon the best, and lengest tyme abiden
Ther peril was, and dide eek such travayle
In armes, that to thenke it was mervayle.

69. But for non hate he to the Grekes hadde,
Ne also for the rescous[4] of the toun,
Ne made him thus in armes for to madde,[5]
But only, lo, for this conclusioun,
To lyken[6] hir the bet for his renoun;
Fro day to day in armes so he spedde,
That alle the Grekes as the deeth him dredde.

70. And fro this forth tho refte him love his sleep,
And made his mete his foo; and eek his sorwe
Gan multiplye, that, who-so toke keep,
It shewed in his hewe, bothe eve and morwe;
Therfor a title he gan him for to borwe
Of other syknesse, lest of him men wende
That the hote fyr of love him brende;

71. And seyde, he hadde a fever and ferde amis;
But how it was, certayn, can I not seye,
If that his lady understood not this,
Or feyned hir she niste, oon of the tweye;
But wel I rede that, by no maner weye,
Ne semed it [as] that she of him roughte,
Nor of his peyne, or what-so-ever he thoughte.

72. But than fel to this Troylus such wo
That he was wel neigh wood; for ay his drede
Was this, that she som wight had loved so,
That never of him she wolde have taken hede;
For whiche him thoughte he felte his herte blede.
Ne of his wo ne dorste he not biginne
To tellen it, for al this world to winne.

73. But whanne he hadde a space fro his care,
Thus to him-self ful ofte he gan to pleyne;
He sayde, 'O fool, now art thou in the snare,
That whilom japedest at loves peyne;
Now artow hent, now gnaw thyn owene cheyne;
Thou were ay wont eche lovere reprehende
Of thing fro which thou canst thee nat defende.

74. What wole now every lover seyn of thee,
If this be wist, but ever in thyn absence
Laughen in scorn, and seyn, "Lo, ther gooth he,
That is the man of so gret sapience,
That held us loveres leest in reverence!
Now, thonked be God, he may goon in the daunce
Of hem that Love list febly for to avaunce!

75. But, O thou woful Troilus, God wolde,
Sin thow most loven thurgh thy destinee,
That thow beset were on swich oon that sholde
Knowe al thy wo, al lakkede hir pitee:
But al so cold in love, towardes thee,
Thy lady is, as frost in winter mone,
And thou fordoon, as snow in fyr is sone."

[1] health. [2] younglings (lit. fawns). [3] An adjective. [4] rescue. [5] rage. [6] please.

76. God wolde I were aryved in the port
Of deeth, to which my sorwe wil me lede!
A, lord, to me it were a greet comfort;
Then were I quit of languisshing in drede.
For by myn hidde sorwe y-blowe on brede[1]
I shal bi-japed been a thousand tyme
More than that fool of whos folye men ryme.

77. But now help God, and ye, swete, for whom
I pleyne, y-caught, ye, never wight so faste!
O mercy, dere herte, and help me from
The deeth, for I, whyl that my lyf may laste,
More than my-self wol love yow to my laste.
And with som freendly look gladeth me, swete,
Though never more thing ye me bi-hete!'[2]

78. This wordes and ful manye an-other to
He spak, and called ever in his compleynte
Hir name, for to tellen hir his wo,
Til neigh that he in salte teres dreynte.[3]
Al was for nought, she herde nought his pleynte;
And whan that he bithoughte on that folye,
A thousand fold his wo gan multiplye.

79. Bi-wayling in his chambre thus allone,
A freend of his, that called was Pandare,
Com ones in unwar, and herde him grone,
And sey his freend in swich distresse and care:
'Allas!' quod he, 'who causeth al this fare?[4]
O mercy, God! what unhap may this mene?
Han now thus sone Grekes maad yow lene?

80. Or hastow som remors of conscience,
And art now falle in som devocioun,
And waylest for thy sinne and thyn offence,
And hast for ferde caught attricioun?[5]
God save hem that bi-seged han our toun,
And so can leye our jolytee on presse,[6]
And bring our lusty folk to holinesse!'

81. These wordes seyde he for the nones alle,[7]
That with swich thing he mighte him angry maken,
And with an angre don his sorwe falle,
As for the tyme, and his corage awaken;
But wel he wiste, as fer as tonges spaken,
Ther nas a man of gretter hardinesse
Than he, ne more desired worthinesse.

82. 'What cas,' quod Troilus, 'or what aventure
Hath gyded thee to see my languisshinge,
That am refus of every creature?
But for the love of God, at my preyinge,
Go henne[8] a-way, for certes, my deyinge
Wol thee disese,[9] and I mot nedes deye;
Ther-for go wey, ther is no more to seye.

83. But if thou wene I be thus syk for drede,
It is not so, and ther-for scorne nought;
Ther is a-nother thing I take of hede
Wel more than ought the Grekes han y-wrought,
Which cause is of my deeth, for sorwe and thought.
But though that I now telle thee it ne leste,[10]
Be thou nought wrooth, I hyde it for the beste.'

84. This Pandare, that neigh malt[11] for wo and routhe,
Ful often seyde, 'Allas! what may this be?
Now freend,' quod he, 'if ever love or trouthe
Hath been, or is, bi-twixen thee and me,
Ne do thou never swiche a crueltee
To hyde fro thy freend so greet a care;
Wostow nought wel that it am I, Pandare?

85. I wole parten[12] with thee al thy peyne,
If it be so I do thee no comfort,
As it is freendes right, sooth for to seyne,
To entreparten[12] wo, as glad desport.
I have, and shal, for[13] trewe or fals report,
In wrong and right y-loved thee al my lyve;
Hyd not thy wo from me, but telle it blyve.'[14]

86. Then gan this sorwful Troilus to syke,
And seyde him thus, 'God leve[15] it be my beste
To telle it thee; for, sith it may thee lyke,
Yet wole I telle it, though myn herte breste;
And wel wot I thou mayst do me no reste.

[1] abroad. [2] promise. [3] drowned. [4] ado.
[5] horror of sin through fear of punishment.
[6] make us put it away — as in a clothes-press.
[7] merely for the nonce.
[8] hence. [9] make uncomfortable. [10] do not care to tell it thee. [11] melted. [12] share. [13] in spite of. [14] quickly. [15] grant.

But lest thow deme I truste not to thee,
Now herkne, freend, for thus it stant with me.

87. Love, a-yeins the which who-so defendeth
Him-selven most, him alder-lest[1] avayleth,
With desespeir so sorwfully me offendeth,
That streyght un-to the deeth myn herte sayleth.
Ther-to desyr so brenningly me assaylleth,
That to ben slayn it were a gretter joye
To me than king of Grece been and Troye!

88. Suffiseth this, my fulle freend Pandare,
That I have seyd, for now wostow my wo;
And for the love of God, my colde care
So hyd it wel, I telle it never to mo;
For harmes mighte folwen, mo than two,
If it were wist; but be thou in gladnesse,
And lat me sterve, unknowe of my distresse.'[2]

89. 'How hastow thus unkindely and longe
Hid this fro me, thou fool?' quod Pandarus;
'Paraunter thou might after swich oon longe,
That myn avys anoon may helpen us.'
'This were a wonder thing,' quod Troilus,
'Thou coudest never in love thy-selven wisse;[3]
How devel maystow bringen me to blisse?'

90. 'Ye, Troilus, now herke,' quod Pandare,
'Though I be nyce;[4] it happeth ofte so,
That oon that exces doth ful yvele fare[5]
By good counseyl can kepe his freend therfro.
I have my-self eek seyn a blind man go
Ther-as he fel that coude loke wyde;
A fool may eek a wys man ofte gyde.

91. A whetston is no kerving instrument,
And yet it maketh sharpe kerving-tolis.
And ther thow woost that I have ought miswent,
Eschewe thou that, for swich thing to thee scole is;
Thus ofte wyse men ben war by folis.

[1] least of all. [2] my distress being unknown.
[3] guide. [4] foolish. [5] that passion causes to fare ill.

If thou do so, thy wit is wel biwared;[6]
By his contrarie is every thing declared.

92. For how might ever sweetnesse have be knowe
To him that never tasted bitternesse?
Ne no man may be inly glad, I trowe,
That never was in sorwe or som distresse;
Eek whyt by blak, by shame eek worthinesse,
Ech set by other, more for other semeth;
As men may see; and so the wyse it demeth.

93. Sith thus of two contraries is a lore,[7]
I, that have in love so ofte assayed
Grevaunces, oughte conne,[8] and wel the more
Counsayllen thee of that thou art amayed.[9]
Eek thee ne oughte nat ben yvel apayed,[10]
Though I desyre with thee for to bere
Thyn hevy charge;[11] it shal the lasse dere.[12]

94. I woot wel that it fareth thus by me
As to thy brother Parys an herdesse,
Which that y-cleped was Oënone,
Wroot in a compleynt of hir hevinesse:
Ye sey the lettre[13] that she wroot, y gesse?'
'Nay, never yet, y-wis,' quod Troilus.
'Now,' quod Pandare, 'herkneth; it was thus.—

95. "Phebus, that first fond art of medicyne,"
Quod she, "and coude in every wightes care
Remede and reed,[14] by herbes he knew fyne,[15]
Yet to him-self his conninge was ful bare;
For love hadde him so bounden in a snare,
Al for the doughter of the kinge Admete,
That al his craft ne coude his sorwe bete."[16]

96. Right so fare I, unhappily for me;
I love oon best, and that me smerteth sore;
And yet, paraunter, can I rede thee,
And not my-self; repreve me no more.
I have no cause, I woot wel, for to sore
As doth an hauk that listeth for to pleye,
But to thyn help yet somwhat can I seye.

97. And of o thing right siker maystow be,
That certayn, for to deyen in the peyne,[17]

[6] spent. [7] one lesson. [8] to know. [9] dismayed.
[10] pleased. [11] load. [12] hurt. [13] See Ovid, *Heroides*, v.
[14] remedy and counsel. [15] An adjective.
[16] amend. [17] though I had to die by torture.

That I shal never-mo discoveren[1] thee;
Ne, by my trouthe, I kepe nat[2] restreyne
Thee fro thy love, thogh that it were Eleyne,
That is thy brotheres wyf, if ich it wiste;
Be what she be, and love hir as thee liste.

98. Therfore, as freend fullich in me assure,[3]
And tel me plat[4] what is thyn enchesoun,[5]
And final cause of wo that ye endure;
For douteth no-thing, myn entencioun
Nis nought to yow of reprehencioun,
To speke as now, for no wight may bireve
A man to love, til that him list to leve.

99. And witeth wel, that bothe two ben vyces, —
Mistrusten alle, or elles alle leve;[6]
But wel I woot, the mene of it no vyce is,
For for to trusten sum wight is a preve
Of trouthe, and for-thy wolde I fayn remeve
Thy wrong conceyte, and do thee som wight triste,[7]
Thy wo to telle; and tel me, if thee liste.

100. The wyse seyth, "Wo him that is allone,
For, and he falle, he hath noon help to ryse;"
And sith thou hast a felawe, tel thy mone;
For this nis not, certeyn, the nexte wyse
To winnen love, as techen us the wyse,
To walwe and wepe as Niobe the quene,
Whos teres yet in marbel been y-sene.

101. Lat be thy weping and thy drerinesse,
And lat us lissen[8] wo with other speche;
So may thy woful tyme seme lesse.
Delyte not in wo thy wo to seche,
As doon thise foles that hir sorwes eche[9]
With sorwe, whan they han misaventure,
And listen[10] nought to seche hem other cure

102. Men seyn, "To wrecche is consolacioun
To have an-other felawe in his peyne;"
That oughte wel ben our opinioun,
For, bothe thou and I, of love we pleyne;
So ful of sorwe am I, soth for to seyne,
That certeynly no more harde grace
May sitte on me, for-why ther is no space!

[1] disclose. [2] care not to. [3] trust. [4] downright. [5] occasion. [6] to believe. [7] cause thee to trust some one. [8] alleviate. [9] augment, eke out. [10] desire.

103. If God wole thou art not agast of me,
Lest I wolde of thy lady thee bigyle,
Thow wost thy-self whom that I love, pardee,
As I best can, gon sithen longe whyle.[11]
And sith thou wost I do it for no wyle,
And sith I am he that thou tristest most,
Tel me sumwhat, sin al my wo thou wost.'

104. Yet Troilus, for al this, no word seyde,
But longe he lay as stille as he ded were;
And after this with sykinge he abreyde,[12]
And to Pandarus voys he lent his ere,
And up his eyen caste he, that in fere
Was Pandarus, lest that in frenesye
He sholde falle, or elles sone deye:

105. And cryde 'A-wake!' ful wonderly and sharpe;
'What? slombrestow as in a lytargye?
Or artow lyk an asse to the harpe,
That hereth soun, whan men the strenges plye,
But in his minde of that no melodye
May sinken, him to glade, for that he
So dul is of his bestialitee?'

106. And with that Pandare of his wordes stente;[13]
But Troilus yet him no word answerde,
For-why to telle nas not his entente
To never no man, for whom that he so ferde.
For it is seyd, 'Man maketh ofte a yerde[14]
With which the maker is him-self y-beten
In sondry maner,' as thise wyse treten,

107. And namely, in his counseyl tellinge
That toucheth love that oughte be secree;
For of him-self it wolde y-nough outspringe,
But-if that it the bet governed be.
Eek som-tyme it is craft to seme flee
Fro thing which in effect men hunte faste;
Al this gan Troilus in his herte caste.

108. But nathelees, whan he had herd him crye
'Awake!' he gan to syke wonder sore,
And seyde, 'Freend, though that I stille lye,
I am not deef; now pees, and cry no more;
For I have herd thy wordes and thy lore;

[11] since long ago. [12] started. [13] ceased. [14] rod.

But suffre me my mischef to biwayle,
For thy proverbes may me nought avayle.

109. Nor other cure canstow noon for me.
Eek I nil not be cured, I wol deye;
What knowe I of the quene Niobe?
Lat be thyne olde ensaumples, I thee preye.'
'No,' quod tho Pandarus, 'therfore I seye,
Swich is delyt of foles to biwepe
Hir wo, but seken bote they ne kepe.

110. Now knowe I that ther reson in thee fayleth.
But tel me, if I wiste what she were
For whom that thee al this misaunter[1] ayleth,
Dorstestow[2] that I tolde hir in hir ere
Thy wo, sith thou darst not thy-self for fere,
And hir bisoughte on thee to han som routhe?'
'Why, nay,' quod he, 'by God and by my trouthe!'

111. 'What? not as bisily,' quod Pandarus,
'As though myn owene lyf lay on this nede?'
'No, certes, brother,' quod this Troilus.
'And why?'—'For that thou sholdest never spede.'
'Wostow that wel?'—'Ye, that is out of drede,'
Quod Troilus, 'for al that ever ye conne,
She nil to noon swich wrecche as I be wonne.'

112. Quod Pandarus, 'Allas! what may this be,
That thou despeyred art thus causelees?
What? liveth not thy lady? *benedicite!*
How wostow so that thou art gracelees?
Swich yvel is not alwey botelees.[3]
Why, put not impossible thus thy cure,
Sin thing to come is ofte in aventure.

113. I graunte wel that thou endurest wo
As sharp as doth he, Ticius,[4] in helle,
Whos stomak foules tyren ever-mo
That highte volturis, as bokes telle.
But I may not endure that thou dwelle
In so unskilful an opinioun
That of thy wo is no curacioun.

[1] misadventure. [2] Wouldst thou dare. [3] without remedy. [4] Tityus.

114. But ones niltow, for thy coward herte,
And for thyn ire and folish wilfulnesse,
For wantrust,[5] tellen of thy sorwes smerte,
Ne to thyn owene help do bisinesse
As muche as speke a resoun more or lesse,
But lyest as he that list of no-thing recche.
What womman coude love swich a wrecche?

115. What may she demen other of thy deeth,
If thou thus deye, and she not why it is,
But that for fere is yolden up thy breeth,
For Grekes han biseged us, y-wis?
Lord, which a thank than shaltow han of this!
Thus wol she seyn, and al the toun at ones,
"The wrecche is deed, the devel have his bones!"

116. Thou mayst allone here wepe and crye and knele;
But, love a woman that she woot it nought,
And she wol quyte that thou shalt not fele;
Unknowe, unkist, and lost that is unsought.
What! many a man hath love ful dere y-bought
Twenty winter that his lady wiste,
That never yet his lady mouth he kiste.

117. What? shulde he therfor fallen in despayr,
Or be recreaunt for his owene tene,[6]
Or sleen him-self, al be his lady fayr?
Nay, nay, but ever in oon[7] be fresh and grene
To serve and love his dere hertes quene,
And thenke it is a guerdoun hir to serve
A thousand-fold more than he can deserve.

118. And of that word took hede Troilus,
And thoughte anoon what folye he was inne,
And how that sooth him seyde Pandarus,
That for to sleen him-self mighte he not winne,
But bothe doon unmanhod and a sinne,
And of his deeth his lady nought to wyte;[8]
For of his wo, God woot, she knew ful lyte.

[5] distrust. [6] vexation. [7] continuously. [8] blame.

119. And with that thought he gan ful sore syke,
And seyde, 'Allas! what is me best to do?'
To whom Pandare answerde, 'If thee lyke,
The best is that thou telle me thy wo;
And have my trouthe, but thou it finde so,
I be thy bote[1] or that it be ful longe,
To peces do me drawe, and sithen honge!'

120. 'Ye, so thou seyst,' quod Troilus tho, 'allas!
But, God wot, it is not the rather so;
Ful hard were it to helpen in this cas,
For wel finde I that Fortune is my fo,
Ne alle the men that ryden conne or go
May of hir cruel wheel the harm withstonde;
For, as hir list, she pleyeth with free and bonde.'

121. Quod Pandarus, 'Than blamestow Fortune
For thou art wrooth, ye, now at erst[2] I see;
Wostow nat wel that Fortune is commune
To every maner wight in som degree?
And yet thou hast this comfort, lo, pardee!
That, as hir joyes moten over-goon,
So mote hir sorwes passen everichoon.

122. For if hir wheel stinte any-thing to torne,
Than cessed she Fortune anoon to be:
Now, sith hir wheel by no wey may sojorne,
What wostow if hir mutabilitee
Right as thy-selven list, wol doon by thee,
Or that she be not fer fro thyn helpinge?
Paraunter, thou hast cause for to singe!

123. And therfor wostow what I thee beseche?
Lat be thy wo and turning to the grounde;
For who-so list have helping of his leche,
To him bihoveth first unwrye[3] his wounde.
To Cerberus in helle ay be I bounde,
Were it for my suster, al thy sorwe,
By my wil, she sholde al be thyn to-morwe.

124. Loke up, I seye, and tel me what she is
Anoon, that I may goon aboute thy nede;
Knowe ich hir ought? For my love, tel me this;
Than wolde I hopen rather[4] for to spede.'
Tho gan the veyne of Troilus to blede,
For he was hit, and wex al reed for shame;
'A ha!' quod Pandare, 'here biginneth game!'

125. And with that word he gan him for to shake,
And seyde, 'Theef, thou shalt hir name telle.'
But tho gan sely[5] Troilus for to quake
As though men sholde han lad him in-to helle,
And seyde, 'Allas! of al my wo the welle,
Than is my swete fo called Criseyde!'
And wel nigh with the word for fere he deyde.

126. And whan that Pandare herde hir name nevene,[6]
Lord, he was glad, and seyde, 'Freend so dere,
Now fare a-right, for Joves name in hevene,
Love hath biset[7] thee wel, be of good chere;
For of good name and wysdom and manere
She hath y-nough, and eek of gentilesse.
If she be fayr, thow wost thy-self, I gesse.

127. Ne I never saw a more bountevous
Of hir estat, ne a gladder, ne of speche
A freendlier, ne a more gracious
For to do wel, ne lasse hadde nede to seche
What for to doon; and al this bet to eche,[8]
In honour, to as fer as she may strecche,[9]
A kinges herte semeth by hires a wrecche.

128. And for-thy[10] loke of good comfort thou be;
For certeinly, the firste poynt is this
Of noble corage and wel ordeynè,[11]
A man to have pees with him-self, y-wis;
So oughtest thou, for nought but good it is
To loven wel, and in a worthy place;
Thee oughte not to clepe it hap, but grace.

129. And also thenk, and ther-with glade thee,
That sith thy lady vertuous is al,
So folweth it that ther is som pitee
Amonges alle thise othere in general;
And for-thy see that thou, in special,
Requere nought that is ayein hir name;
For vertue streccheth not him-self to shame.[12]

[1] That I am your remedy. [2] for the first time. [3] uncover. [4] sooner. [5] poor. [6] named. [7] bestowed. [8] the more to enhance. [9] within her proper sphere. [10] therefore. [11] regulated. [12] Virtue goes not to the extent of shaming virtue; or, virtue does nothing shameful.

130. But wel is me that ever I was born,
That thou biset art in so good a place;
For by my trouthe, in love I dorste have sworn,
Thee sholde never han tid thus fayr a grace;
And wostow why? For thou were wont to chace
At love in scorn, and for despyt him calle
"Seynt Idiot, lord of thise foles alle."

131. How often hastow maad thy nyce japes,[1]
And seyd, that loves servants everichone
Of nycetee ben verray Goddes apes;
And some wolde monche[2] hir mete alone,
Ligging a-bedde, and make hem for to grone;
And som, thou seydest, hadde a blaunche fevere,[3]
And preydest God he sholde never kevere![4]

132. And some of hem toke on hem, for the colde,
More than y-nough,[5] so seydestow ful ofte;
And some han feyned ofte tyme, and tolde
How that they wake, whan they slepen softe;
And thus they wolde han brought hemself a-lofte,[6]
And nathelees were under at the laste;
Thus seydestow, and japedest ful faste.

133. Yet seydestow, that, for the more part,
These loveres wolden speke in general,[7]
And thoughten that it was a siker art,
For fayling,[8] for to assayen over-al.[9]
Now may I jape of thee, if that I shal!
But natheless, though that I sholde deye,
That thou art noon of tho, that dorste I seye.

134. Now beet thy brest, and sey to god of love,
"Thy grace, lord! for now I me repente
If I mis-spak, for now my-self I love:"
Thus sey with al thyn herte in good entente.'
Quod Troilus, 'A! lord! I me consente,
And pray to thee my japes thou forgive,
And I shal never-more whyl I live.'

135. 'Thow seyst wel,' quod Pandare, 'and now I hope
That thou the goddes wraththe hast al apesed;
And sithen thou hast wepen many a drope,
And seyd swich thing wher-with thy god is plesed,
Now wolde never God but thou were esed;
And think wel, she of whom rist[10] al thy wo
Here-after may thy comfort been al-so.

136. For thilke ground, that bereth the wedes wikke,
Bereth eek thise holsom herbes, as ful ofte
Next the foule netle, rough and thikke,
The rose waxeth swote and smothe and softe;
And next the valey is the hill a-lofte;
And next the derke night the glade morwe;
And also joye is next the fyn[11] of sorwe.

137. Now loke that atempre be thy brydel,[12]
And, for the beste, ay suffre to the tyde,[13]
Or elles al our labour is on ydel;
He hasteth wel that wysly can abyde;
Be diligent, and trewe, and ay wel hyde.
Be lusty, free, persevere in thy servyse,
And al is wel, if thou werke in this wyse.

138. But he that parted is in every place
Is no-wher hool, as writen clerkes wyse;
What wonder is, though swich oon have no grace?
Eek wostow how it fareth of som servyse?
As plaunte a tre or herbe, in sondry wyse,
And on the morwe pulle it up as blyve,
No wonder is though it may never thryve.

139. And sith that god of love hath thee bistowed
In place digne un-to thy worthinesse,
Stond faste, for to good port hastow rowed;
And of thy-self, for any hevinesse,
Hope alwey wel; for, but-if drerinesse
Or over-haste our bothe labour shende,
I hope of this to maken a good ende.

140. And wostow why I am the lasse afered
Of this matere with my nece trete?[14]

[1] foolish jests. [2] munch.
[3] Jocose — a white fever. [4] recover.
[5] Made over-much pretense of being afflicted by the lady's coldness.
[6] advanced themselves. [7] in generalities.
[8] A sure method to prevent failure. [9] everywhere.
[10] rises. [11] end. [12] temperate be thy bridle.
[13] accommodate thyself to the occasion. [14] to treat.

For this have I herd seyd of wyse y-lered,[1]
"Was never man ne woman yet bigete
That was unapt to suffren loves hete
Celestial, or elles love of kinde;"
For-thy som grace I hope in hir to finde.

141. And for to speke of hir in special,
Hir beautee to bithinken and hir youthe,
It sit[2] hir nought to be celestial
As yet, though that hir liste bothe and couthe;
But trewely, it sete[3] hire wel right nouthe[4]
A worthy knight to loven and cheryce,
And but she do, I holde it for a vyce.

142. Wherfore I am, and wol be, ay redy
To peyne me to do yow this servyse;
For bothe yow to plese thus hope I
Her-afterward; for ye beth bothe wyse,
And conne it counseyl kepe in swich a wyse,
That no man shal the wyser of it be;
And so we may be gladed alle three.

143. And, by my trouthe, I have right now of thee
A good conceyt in my wit, as I gesse,
And what it is, I wol now that thou see.
I thenke, sith that love, of his goodnesse,
Hath the converted out of wikkednesse,
That thou shalt be the beste post,[5] I leve,
Of al his lay,[6] and most his foos to-greve.'[7]

144. Ensample why, see now these wyse clerkes,
That erren aldermost a-yein a lawe,
And ben converted from hir wikked werkes
Thorugh grace of God, that list hem to him drawe,
Than arn they folk that han most God in awe,
And strengest-feythed been, I understonde,
And conne an errour alder-best withstonde.'

145. Whan Troilus had herd Pandare assented
To been his help in loving of Criseyde,
Wex of his wo, as who seyth,[8] untormented;
But hotter wex his love, and thus he seyde,
With sobre chere, al-though his herte pleyde
'Now blisful Venus helpe, er that I sterve,
Of thee, Pandare, I may som thank deserve.

146. But, dere frend, how shal myn wo ben lesse
Til this be doon? And goode, eek tel me this,
How wiltow seyn of me and my destresse?
Lest she be wrooth, this drede I most, y-wis,
Or nil not here or trowen how it is.
Al this drede I, and eek for the manere
Of thee, hir eem,[9] she nil no swich thing here.'

147. Quod Pandarus, 'Thou hast a ful gret care
Lest that the cherl may falle out of the mone!
Why, lord! I hate of thee thy nyce fare![10]
Why, entremete of that thou hast to done![11]
For Goddes love, I bidde thee a bone,[12]
So lat me alone, and it shal be thy beste.'—
'Why, freend,' quod he, 'now do right as thee leste.

148. But herke, Pandare, o word, for I nolde
That thou in me wendest so greet folye,
That to my lady I desiren sholde
That toucheth harm or any vilenye;
For dredelees, me were lever dye
Than she of me ought elles understode
But that that mighte sounen[13] in-to gode.'

149. Tho lough[14] this Pandare, and anoon answerde,
'And I thy borw?[15] Fy! no wight dooth but so;
I roughte[16] nought though that she stode and herde
How that thou seyst; but fare-wel, I wol go.
A-dieu! be glad! God spede us bothe two!
Yif me this labour and this besinesse,
And of my speed be thyn al that swetnesse.'

150. Tho Troilus gan doun on knees to falle,
And Pandare in his armes hente faste,
And seyde, 'Now, fy on the Grekes alle!
Yet, pardee, God shal helpe us at the laste;
And dredelees, if that my lyf may laste,
And God to-forn,[17] lo, som of hem shal smerte;
And yet me athinketh that this avaunt me asterte![18]

[1] learned ones. [2] becometh. [3] would become. [4] now. [5] pillar. [6] religion. [7] grieve excessively. [8] as it were.

[9] uncle; cf. Ger. *Oheim*. [10] foolish fuss. [11] mind your own business. [12] ask a favor of you. [13] tend. [14] laughed. [15] backer, security. [16] should reck. [17] before God. [18] I repent that this boast escaped me.

151. Now, Pandare, I can no more seye,
But thou wys, thou wost, thou mayst, thou art al!
My lyf, my deeth, hool in thyn honde I leye;
Help now,' quod he. 'Yis, by my trouthe, I shal.'
'God yelde[1] thee, freend, and this in special,'
Quod Troilus, 'that thou me recomaunde
To hir that to the deeth me may comaunde.'

152. This Pandarus tho, desirous to serve
His fulle freend, than seyde in this manere,
'Far-wel, and thenk I wol thy thank deserve;
Have here my trouthe, and that thou shalt wel here.'—
And wente his wey, thenking on this matere,
And how he best mighte hir beseche of grace,
And finde a tyme ther-to, and a place.

153. For every wight that hath an hous to founde
Ne renneth nought the werk for to biginne
With rakel[2] hond, but he wol byde a stounde,[3]
And sende his hertes lyne out fro with-inne
Alderfirst his purpos for to winne.

[1] reward. [2] rash. [3] time.

Al this Pandare in his herte thoughte,
And caste[4] his werk ful wysly, or[5] he wroughte.

154. But Troilus lay tho no lenger doun,
But up anoon up-on his stede bay,
And in the feld he pleyde tho leoun;
Wo was that Greek that with him mette that day.
And in the toun his maner tho forth ay
So goodly was, and gat him so in grace,
That ech him lovede that loked on his face.

155. For he bicom the frendlyeste wight,
The gentileste, and eek the moste free,
The thriftieste[6] and oon the beste knight,
That in his tyme was, or mighte be.
Dede were his japes and his crueltee,
His heighe port and his manere estraunge,
And ech of tho gan for a vertu chaunge.

156. Now lat us stinte of Troilus a stounde,
That fareth lyk a man that hurt is sore,
And is somdel of akinge of his wounde
Y-lissed[7] wel, but heled no del more:
And, as an esy pacient, the lore
Abit[8] of him that gooth aboute his cure;
And thus he dryveth forth his aventure.

Explicit Liber Primus.

[4] planned. [5] before. [6] most successful.
[7] Relieved. [8] Abideth.

THE LEGEND OF GOOD WOMEN

PROLOGUE A

The prologe of ix. goode Wimmen.

A THOUSAND sythes[1] have I herd men telle,
That ther is joye in heven, and peyne in helle;
And I acorde wel that hit be so;
But natheles, this wot I wel also,
That ther nis noon that dwelleth in this contree,
That either hath in helle or heven y-be,
Ne may of hit non other weyes witen,[2]
But as he hath herd seyd, or founde hit writen;
For by assay ther may no man hit preve.
But Goddes forbode,[3] but men shulde leve[4]
Wel more thing then men han seen with yë![5]
Men shal nat wenen every-thing a lyë
For that he seigh it nat of yore ago.
God wot, a thing is never the lesse so
Thogh every wight he may hit nat y-see.
Bernard the monk[6] ne saugh nat al, parde!
Than mote we to bokes that we finde,
Through which that olde thinges been in minde,
And to the doctrine of these olde wyse,
Yeven credence, in every skilful[7] wyse,
And trowen on these olde aproved stories
Of holinesse, of regnes,[8] of victories,
Of love, of hate, of other sundry thinges,
Of whiche I may not maken rehersinges.
And if that olde bokes were a-weye,
Y-loren were of remembraunce the keye.
Wel oghte us than on olde bokes leve,
Ther-as ther is non other assay by preve.[9]
And, as for me, though that my wit be lyte,
On bokes for to rede I me delyte,
And in myn herte have hem in reverence;
And to hem yeve swich lust and swich credence,
That ther is wel unethe game noon[10]
That from my bokes make me to goon,

[1] times. [2] know. [3] God's prohibition — i.e. God forbid! [4] believe. [5] eye. [6] Bernard of Clairvaux. [7] reasonable. [8] empires. [9] testing by experiment. [10] scarcely any game.

But hit be other up-on the haly-day,
Or elles in the joly tyme of May;
Whan that I here the smale foules singe,
And that the floures ginne for to springe,
Farwel my studie, as lasting that sesoun!
Now have I therto this condicioun[11]
That, of alle the floures in the mede,
Than love I most these floures whyte and rede,
Swiche as men callen daysies in our toun.
To hem have I so greet affeccioun,
As I seyde erst, whan comen is the May,
That in my bed ther daweth[12] me no day
That I nam up, and walking in the mede
To seen these floures agein the sonne sprede,
Whan it up-riseth by the morwe shene,
The longe day, thus walking in the grene.
And whan the sonne gynneth for to weste,
Than closeth hit, and draweth hit to reste,
So sore hit is afered of the night,
Til on the morwe, that hit is dayes light.
This dayesye, of alle floures flour,
Fulfild of vertu and of alle honour,
And ever y-lyke fair and fresh of hewe,
As wel in winter as in somer newe,
Fain wolde I preisen, if I coude aright;
But wo is me, hit lyth nat in my might!
For wel I wot, that folk han her-beforn
Of making ropen,[13] and lad a-wey the corn;
And I come after, glening here and there,
And am ful glad if I may finde an ere
Of any goodly word that they han left.
And, if hit happe me rehersen eft
That they han in her fresshe songes sayd,
I hope that they wil nat ben evel apayd,[14]
Sith hit is seid in forthering and honour
Of hem that either serven leef or flour.[15]
For trusteth wel, I ne have nat undertake
As of the leef, ageyn the flour, to make;[16]
Ne of the flour to make, ageyn the leef,
No more than of the corn ageyn the sheef.
For, as to me, is leefer noon ne lother;
I am with-holde[17] yit with never nother.

[11] peculiarity. [12] dawns.
[13] Reaped the poetic field; an allusion to the French "Marguerite" poets. [14] pleased.
[15] Apparently poets sided in playful allegory with one or the other. [16] compose poetry. [17] retained.

I not who serveth leef, ne who the flour;
That nis nothing the entent of my labour.
For this werk is al of another tunne,[1]
Of olde story, er swich stryf was begunne.
But wherfor that I spak, to yeve credence
To bokes olde and doon hem reverence,
Is for men shulde autoritees beleve,
Ther as ther lyth non other assay by preve.
For myn entent is, or I fro yow fare,
The naked text in English to declare
Of many a story, or elles of many a gest,
As autours seyn; leveth hem if yow leste!
Whan passed was almost the month of May,
And I had romed, al the someres day,
The grene medew, of which that I yow tolde,
Upon the fresshe daysy to beholde,
And that the sonne out of the south gan weste,
And closed was the flour and goon to reste
For derknesse of the night, of which she dredde,
Hoom to myn hous ful swiftly I me spedde;
And, in a litel erber[2] that I have,
Y-benched[3] newe with turves fresshe y-grave,
I bad men shulde me my couche make;
For deyntee of the newe someres sake,
I bad hem strowe floures on my bed.
Whan I was layd, and had myn eyen hed,
I fel a-slepe with-in an houre or two.
Me mette how I was in the medew tho,
And that I romed in that same gyse,
To seen that flour, as ye han herd devyse.
Fair was this medew, as thoughte me overal;
With floures swote embrowded was it al;
As for to speke of gomme, or erbe, or tree,
Comparisoun may noon y-maked be.
For hit surmounted pleynly alle odoures,
And eek of riche beaute alle floures.
Forgeten had the erthe his pore estat
Of winter, that him naked made and mat,[4]
And with his swerd of cold so sore had greved.
Now had the atempre sonne al that releved,
And clothed him in grene al newe agayn.
The smale foules, of the seson fayn,
That from the panter[5] and the net ben scaped,
Upon the fouler, that hem made a-whaped[6]
In winter, and distroyed had hir brood,
In his despyt, hem thoughte hit did hem good
To singe of him, and in hir song despyse
The foule cherl that, for his covetyse,
Had hem betrayed with his sophistrye.
This was hir song — 'The fouler we defye!'
Somme songen [layes] on the braunches clere
Of love and [May], that joye hit was to here,
In worship and in preysing of hir make,[7]
And of the newe blisful someres sake,
That songen, 'Blissed be seynt Valentyn!
[For] at his day I chees yow to be myn,
With-oute repenting, myn herte swete!'
And therwith-al hir bekes gonnen mete.
They dide honour and humble obeisaunces,
And after diden other observaunces
Right [plesing] un-to love and to nature;
So ech of hem [doth wel] to creature.
This song to herkne I dide al myn entente,
For-why I mette[8] I wiste what they mente.
Til at the laste a larke song above:
'I see, quod she, 'the mighty god of love!
Lo! yond he cometh, I see his winges sprede!'
Tho gan I loken endelong the mede,
And saw him come, and in his hond a quene,
Clothed in ryal abite al of grene.
A fret[9] of gold she hadde next hir heer,
And up-on that a whyt coroun she beer
With many floures, and I shal nat lye;
For al the world, right as the dayesye
I-coroned is with whyte leves lyte,
Swich were the floures of hir coroun whyte.
For of o perle fyn and oriental
Hir whyte coroun was y-maked al;
For which the whyte coroun, above the grene,
Made hir lyk a daysie for to sene,
Considered eek the fret of gold above.
Y-clothed was this mighty god of love
Of silk, y-brouded[10] ful of grene greves;
A garlond on his heed of rose-leves
Steked al with lilie floures newe;
But of his face I can nat seyn the hewe.
For sekirly his face shoon so brighte,
That with the gleem a-stoned was the sighte;
A furlong-wey I mighte him nat beholde.
But at the laste in hande I saw him holde

[1] of quite another matter. [2] arbor. [3] With raised seats of turf. [4] dead. [5] large bird-net. [6] scared.
[7] their mate. [8] Because I dreamt. [9] ornament. [10] embroidered.

Two fyry dartes, as the gledes[1] rede;
And aungellich his wenges gan he sprede.
And al be that men seyn that blind is he,
Al-gate[2] me thoughte he mighte wel y-see;
For sternely on me he gan biholde,
So that his loking doth myn herte colde.
And by the hande he held the noble quene,
Corouned with whyte, and clothed al in grene.
So womanly, so benigne, and so meke,
That in this world, thogh that men wolde seke,
Half hir beautee shulde men nat finde
In creature that formed is by kinde,
Hir name was Alceste the debonayre;
I prey to God that ever falle she fayre!
For ne hadde confort been of hir presence,
I had be deed, withouten any defence,
For drede of Loves wordes and his chere,
As, whan tyme is, her-after ye shal here.
Byhind this god of love, up-on this grene,
I saw cominge of ladyës nyntene
In ryal abite, a ful esy pas,
And after hem com of wemen swich a tras[3]
That, sin that God Adam made of erthe,
The thredde part of wemen, ne the ferthe,
Ne wende I nat by possibilitee
Hadden ever in this world y-be;
And trewe of love thise wemen were echoon.
Now whether was that a wonder thing or noon,
That, right anoon as that they gonne espye
This flour, which that I clepe the dayesye,
Ful sodeinly they stinten alle at-ones,
And kneled adoun, as it were for the nones.
And after that they wenten in compas,
Daunsinge aboute this flour an esy pas,
And songen, as it were in carole-wyse,
This balade, which that I shal yow devyse.

BALADE

Hyd, Absolon, thy gilte tresses clere;
Ester, ley thou thy meknesse al a-doun;
Hyd, Jonathas,[4] al thy friendly manere;
Penalopee, and Marcia Catoun,
Mak of your wyfhod no comparisoun;
Hyde ye your beautes, Isoude[5] and Eleyne,[6]
Alceste is here, that al that may desteyne.[7]

Thy faire bodye, lat hit nat appere,
Lavyne; and thou, Lucresse of Rome toun,
And Polixene, that boghte love so dere,
Eek Cleopatre, with al thy passioun,
Hyde ye your trouthe in love and your renoun;
And thou, Tisbe, that hast for love swich peyne:
Alceste is here, that al that may desteyne.

Herro, Dido, Laudomia, alle in-fere,
Eek Phyllis, hanging for thy Demophoun,
And Canace, espyed by thy chere,
Ysiphile, betrayed with Jasoun,
Mak of your trouthe in love no bost ne soun;
Nor Ypermistre[8] or Adriane,[9] ne pleyne;
Alceste is here, that al that may desteyne.

Whan that this balade al y-songen was,
Upon the softe and swote grene gras,
They setten hem ful softely adoun,
By ordre alle in compas, alle enveroun.
First sat the god of love, and than this quene
With the whyte coroun, clad in grene;
And sithen al the remenant by and by,[10]
As they were of degree,[11] ful curteisly;
Ne nat a word was spoken in the place
The mountance of a furlong-wey of space.[12]
I, lening faste by under a bente,[13]
Abood, to knowen what this peple mente,
As stille as any stoon; til at the laste,
The god of love on me his eye caste,
And seyde, 'Who resteth ther?' and I answerde
Un-to his axing, whan that I him herde,
And seyde, 'Sir, hit am I'; and cam him neer,
And salued him. Quod he, 'What dostow heer
In my presence, and that so boldely?
For it were better worthy, trewely,
A werm to comen in my sight than thou.'
'And why, sir,' quod I, 'and hit lyke yow?'
'For thou,' quod he, 'art ther-to nothing able.[14]
My servaunts been alle wyse and honourable.
Thou art my mortal fo, and me warreyest,[15]
And of myne olde servaunts thou misseyest,
And hinderest hem, with thy translacioun,
And lettest[16] folk to han devocioun

[1] firebrands. [2] Nevertheless. [3] heap. [4] Jonathan. [5] Iseult, Isolde. [6] Elaine who loved Lancelot, or Helen of Troy. [7] bedim.
[8] Hypermnestra. [9] Ariadne. [10] alongside. [11] according to rank. [12] The amount of time it takes to go a furlong. [13] little hill. [14] suitable. [15] makest war upon. [16] dost hinder.

To serven me, and haldest hit folye
To troste on me. Thou mayst hit nat denye;
For in pleyn text, hit nedeth nat to glose,[1]
Thou hast translated the Romauns of the Rose,
That is an heresye ageyns my lawe,
And makest wyse folk fro me withdrawe.
And thinkest in thy wit, that is ful cool,[2]
That he nis but a verray propre fool
That loveth paramours,[3] to harde and hote.
Wel wot I ther-by thou beginnest dote
As olde foles, whan hir spirit fayleth;
Than blame they folk, and wite nat what hem ayleth.
Hast thou nat mad in English eek the book
How that Crisseyde Troilus forsook,
In shewinge how that wemen han don mis?
But natheles, answere me now to this,
Why noldest thou as wel han seyd good-
Of wemen, as thou hast seyd wikkednesse?
Was ther no good matere in thy minde,
Ne in alle thy bokes coudest thou nat finde
Sum story of wemen that were goode and trewe?
Yis! God wot, sixty bokes olde and newe
Hast thou thy-self, alle fulle of stories grete,
That bothe Romains and eek Grekes trete
Of sundry wemen, which lyf that they ladde,
And ever an hundred gode ageyn oon badde.
This knoweth God, and alle clerkes eke,
That usen swiche materes for to seke.
What seith Valerie,[4] Titus,[5] or Claudian[6]?
What seith Jerome ageyns Jovinian?[7]
How clene maydens, and how trewe wyves,
How stedfast widwes during al hir lyves,
Telleth Jerome; and that nat of a fewe,
But, I dar seyn, an hundred on a rewe;
That hit is pitee for to rede, and routhe,
The wo that they enduren for hir trouthe.
For to hir love were they so trewe,
That, rather than they wolde take a newe,
They chosen to be dede in sundry wyse,
And deyden, as the story wol devyse;
And some were brend, and some were cut the hals,[8]
And some dreynt,[9] for they wolden nat be fals.

[1] explain it away. [2] stupid. [3] like a lover.
[4] Supposed author of a bitter mediæval treatise against marriage.
[5] Livy. [6] In his *De Raptu Proserpinae?*
[7] The Saint's famous tirade against women and marriage. [8] had their throats cut. [9] drowned.

For alle keped they hir maydenhed,
Or elles wedlok, or hir widwehed.
And this thing was nat kept for holinesse,
But al for verray vertu and clennesse,
And for men shulde sette on hem no lak,[10]
And yit they weren hethen, al the pak,
That were so sore adrad of alle shame.
These olde wemen kepte so hir name,
That in this world I trow men shal nat finde
A man that coude be so trewe and kinde,
As was the leste woman in that tyde.
What seith also the epistles of Ovyde
Of trewe wyves, and of hir labour?
What Vincent, in his Storial Mirour?[11]
Eek al the world of autours maystow here,
Cristen and hethen, trete of swich matere;
It nedeth nat alday thus for t'endyte,
But yit I sey, what eyleth thee to wryte
The draf[12] of stories, and forgo the corn?
By seint Venus, of whom that I was born,
Although [that] thou reneyed hast my lay,[13]
As othere olde foles many a day,
Thou shalt repente hit, that hit shal be sene!
Than spak Alceste, the worthieste quene,
And seyde, 'God, right of your curtesye,
Ye moten herknen if he can replye
Ageyns these points that ye han to him meved;
A god ne sholde nat be thus agreved,
But of his deitee he shal be stable,
And therto rightful and eek merciable.
He shal nat rightfully his yre wreke
Or he have herd the tother party speke.
Al ne is nat gospel that is to yow pleyned;
The god of love herth many a tale y-feyned.
For in your court is many a losengeour,[14]
And many a queynte totelere[15] accusour,
That tabouren[16] in your eres many a thing
For hate, or for jelous imagining,
And for to han with yow som daliaunce.
Envye (I prey to God yeve hir mischaunce!)
Is lavender[17] in the grete court alway.
For she ne parteth, neither night ne day,
Out of the hous of Cesar; thus seith Dante;[18]
Who-so that goth, alwey she moot [nat] wante.
This man to yow may wrongly been accused,
Ther as by right him oghte been excused.

[10] reproach. [11] The *Speculum Historiale* of Vincent of Beauvais, thirteenth century. [12] chaff.
[13] renounced my religion. [14] flatterer. [15] tattling.
[16] drum. [17] laundress, harlot. [18] *Inferno*, xiii, 64.

Or elles, sir, for that this man is nyce,[1]
He may translate a thing in no malyce,
But for he useth bokes for to make,
And takth non heed of what matere he take;
Therfor he wroot the Rose and eek Crisseyde
Of innocence, and niste what he seyde;
Or him was boden make thilke tweye
Of som persone, and durste hit nat withseye;
For he hath writen many a book er this.
He ne hath nat doon so grevously amis
To translaten that olde clerkes wryten,
As thogh that he of malice wolde endyten
Despyt of love, and hadde him-self y-wroght.
This shulde a rightwys lord han in his thoght,
And nat be lyk tiraunts of Lumbardye,
That usen wilfulhed and tirannye,
For he that king or lord is naturel,
Him oghte nat be tiraunt ne cruel,
As is a fermour,[2] to doon the harm he can.
He moste thinke hit is his lige man,
And that him oweth, of verray duetee,
Shewen his peple pleyn benignitee,
And wel to here hir excusaciouns,
And hir compleyntes and peticiouns,
In duewe tyme, whan they shal hit profre.
This is the sentence of the philosophre:
A king to kepe his liges in justyce,
With-outen doute, that is his offyce.
And therto is a king ful depe y-sworn,
Ful many an hundred winter heer-biforn;
And for to kepe his lordes hir degree,
As hit is right and skilful that they be
Enhaunced and honoured, and most dere —
For they ben half-goddes in this world here —
This shal he doon, bothe to pore [and] riche,
Al be that her estat be nat a-liche,
And han of pore folk compassioun.
For lo, the gentil kind of the lioun!
For whan a flye offendeth him or byteth,
He with his tayl awey the flye smyteth
Al esily; for, of his genterye,
Him deyneth nat to wreke him on a flye,
As doth a curre or elles another beste.
In noble corage oghte been areste,
And weyen every thing by equitee,
And ever han reward to his owen degree.

[1] foolish. [2] farmer of taxes, extortioner.

For, sir, hit is no maystrie for a lord
To dampne a man with-oute answere or word;
And, for a lord, that is ful foul to use.
And if so be he may him nat excuse,
[But] axeth mercy with a sorweful herte,
And profreth him, right in his bare sherte,
To been right at your owne jugement,
Than oghte a god, by short avysement,
Considre his owne honour and his trespas.
For sith no cause of deeth lyth in this cas,
Yow oghte been the lighter merciable;
Leteth your yre, and beth somwhat tretable!
The man hath served yow of his conning,
And forthered your lawe with his making.
Whyl he was yong, he kepte your estat;
I not wher he be now a renegat.
But wel I wot, with that he can endyte,
He hath maked lewed folk delyte
To serve you, in preysing of your name.
He made the book that hight the Hous of Fame,
And eek the Deeth of Blaunche the Duchesse,
And the Parlement of Foules, as I gesse,
And al the love of Palamon and Arcyte
Of Thebes, thogh the story is knowen lyte;
And many an ympne[3] for your halydayes,
That highten Balades, Roundels, Virelayes;
And for to speke of other besinesse,
He hath in prose translated Boëce;
And of the Wreched Engendring of Mankinde,
As man may in pope Innocent y-finde;
And mad the Lyf also of seynt Cecyle;
He made also, goon sithen a greet whyl,
Origenes upon the Maudeleyne;
Him oghte now to have the lesse peyne;
He hath mad many a lay and many a thing.

Now as ye been a god, and eek a king,
I, your Alceste, whylom quene of Trace,
I axe yow this man, right of your grace,
That ye him never hurte in al his lyve;
And he shal sweren yow, and that as blyve,[4]
He shal no more agilten[5] in this wyse;
But he shal maken, as ye wil devyse,
Of wemen trewe in lovinge al hir lyve,
Wher-so ye wil, of maiden or of wyve,
And forthren yow, as muche as he misseyde
Or in the Rose or elles in Criseyde.'

The god of love answerde hir thus anoon,
'Madame,' quod he, 'hit is so long agoon

[3] hymn. [4] forthwith. [5] be guilty.

That I yow knew so charitable and trewe,
That never yit, sith that the world was newe,
To me ne fond I better noon than ye;
That, if that I wol save my degree,
I may ne wol nat warne your requeste;
Al lyth in yow, doth with him what yow leste,
And al foryeve, with-outen lenger space;
For who-so yeveth a yift, or doth a grace,
Do hit by tyme, his thank is wel the more;
And demeth ye what he shal do therfore.
Go thanke now my lady heer,' quod he.
I roos, and doun I sette me on my knee,
And seyde thus: 'Madame, the God above
Foryelde[1] yow, that ye the god of love
Han maked me his wrathe to foryive;
And yeve me grace so long for to live,
That I may knowe soothly what ye be,
That han me holpen, and put in swich degree.
But trewely I wende, as in this cas,
Naught have agilt, ne doon to love trespas.
Forwhy a trewe man, with-outen drede,
Hath nat to parten with[2] a theves dede;
Ne a trewe lover oghte me nat blame,
Thogh that I speke a fals lover som shame.
They oghte rather with me for to holde,
For that I of Creseyde wroot or tolde,
Or of the Rose; what-so myn auctour mente,
Algate, God wot, hit was myn entente
To forthren trouthe in love and hit cheryce;
And to be war fro falsnesse and fro vyce
By swich ensample; this was my meninge.'
And she answerde, 'Lat be thyn arguinge;
For Love ne wol nat countrepleted[3] be
In right ne wrong; and lerne this at me!
Thou hast thy grace, and hold thee right ther-to.
Now wol I seyn what penance thou shalt do
For thy trespas, and understond hit here:
Thou shalt, whyl that thou livest, yeer by yere,
The moste party of thy lyve spende
In making of a glorious Legende
Of Gode Wemen, maidenes and wyves,
That were trewe in lovings al hir lyves;
And telle of false men that hem bitrayen,
That al hir lyf ne doon nat but assayen

[1] Repay. [2] has no part in. [3] pleaded against.

How many [illegible]en they may doon a shame;
For in yo[illegible]orld that is now holden game.
And th[illegible]hou lesteth nat a lover be,
Spek[illegible]of love; this penance yeve I thee.
An[illegible]the god of love I shal so preye,
T[illegible]he shal charge his servants, by any weye,
To forthren thee, and wel thy labour quyte;
Go now thy wey, thy penance is but lyte.'
The god of love gan smyle, and than he seyde,
'Wostow,' quod he, 'wher this be wyf or mayde,
Or quene, or countesse, or of what degree,
That hath so litel penance yeven thee,
That hast deserved sorer for to smerte?
But pitee renneth sone in gentil herte;
That mayst thou seen, she kytheth[4] what she is.'
And I answerde, 'Nay, sir, so have I blis,
No more but that I see wel she is good.'
'That is a trewe tale, by myn hood,'
Quod Love, 'and that thou knowest wel, pardee,
If hit be so that thou avyse thee.
Hastow nat in a book, lyth in thy cheste,
The grete goodnesse of the quene Alceste,
That turned was into a dayesye:
She that for hir husbonde chees to dye,
And eek to goon to helle, rather than he,
And Ercules rescuëd hir, pardee,
And broghte hir out of helle agayn to blis?'
And I answerde ageyn, and seyde, 'Yis,
Now knowe I hir! And is this good Alceste,
The dayesye, and myn owne hertes reste?
Now fele I wel the goodnesse of this wyf,
That bothe after hir deeth, and in hir lyf,
Hir grete bountee doubleth hir renoun!
Wel hath she quit me myn affeccioun
That I have to hir flour, the dayesye!
No wonder is thogh Jove hir stellifye,
As telleth Agaton,[5] for hir goodnesse!
Hir whyte coroun berth of hit witnesse;
For also many vertues hadde she,
As smale floures in hir coroun be.
In remembraunce of hir and in honour,
Cibella[6] made the dayesy and the flour
Y-coroned al with whyt, as men may see,
And Mars yaf to hir coroun reed, pardee,
In stede of rubies, set among the whyte.'
Therwith this quene wex reed for shame a lyte,

[4] makes known. [5] Possibly the Athenian tragic poet of the fifth century B.C. [6] Cybele.

Whan she was preysed so in hir presence.
Than seyde Love, 'A ful gret negligence
Was hit to thee, to write unstedfastnesse
Of women, sith thou knowest hir goodnesse
By preef, and eek by stories heer-biforn;
Let be the chaf, and wryt wel of the corn.
Why noldest thou han writen of Alceste,
And leten Criseide been a-slepe and reste?
For of Alceste shulde thy wryting be,
Sin that thou wost that kalender[1] is she
Of goodnesse, for she taughte of fyn lovinge,
And namely of wyfhood the livinge,
And alle the boundes that she oghte kepe;
Thy litel wit was thilke tyme a-slepe.
But now I charge thee, upon thy lyf,
That in thy legend thou make of this wyf,
Whan thou hast othere smale maad before;
And fare now wel, I charge thee no more.
At Cleopatre I wol that thou beginne;
And so forth; and my love so shalt thou winne.'
And with that word of sleep I gan a-awake,
And right thus on my Legend gan I make.

THE LEGEND OF CLEOPATRA

Incipit Legenda Cleopatrie, Martiris, Egipti regine.

After the deeth of Tholomee[2] the king,
That al Egipte hadde in his governing,
Regned his quene Cleopataras;
Til on a tyme befel ther swiche a cas,
That out of Rome was sent a senatour,
For to conqueren regnes and honour
Unto the toun of Rome, as was usaunce,
To have the world unto her obeisaunce;
And, sooth to seye, Antonius was his name.
So fil hit, as Fortune him oghte[3] a shame
Whan he was fallen in prosperitee,
Rebel unto the toun of Rome is he.
And over al this, the suster of Cesar,
He lafte hir falsly, er that she was war,
And wolde algates han another wyf;
For whiche he took with Rome and Cesar stryf.
Natheles, for-sooth, this ilke senatour
Was a ful worthy gentil werreyour,
And of his deeth hit was ful greet damage.
But love had broght this man in swiche a rage,

[1] example. [2] Ptolemy. [3] owed.

And him so narwe bounden in his las,
Al for the love of Cleopataras,
That al the world he sette at no value.
Him thoughte, nas to him no thing so due
As Cleopatras for to love and serve;
Him roghte[4] nat in armes for to sterve
In the defence of hir, and of hir right.
This noble quene eek lovede so this knight,
Through his desert, and for his chivalrye;
As certeinly, but-if that bokes lye,
He was, of persone and of gentilesse,
And of discrecioun and hardinesse,
Worthy to any wight that liven may,
And she was fair as is the rose in May.
And, for to maken shortly is the beste,
She wex his wyf, and hadde him as hir leste.
The wedding and the feste to devyse,
To me, that have y-take swiche empryse
Of so many a storie for to make,
Hit were to long, lest that I sholde slake
Of thing that bereth more effect and charge;[5]
For men may overlade a ship or barge;
And forthy to th'effect than wol I skippe,
And al the remenant, I wol lete hit slippe.
Octovian, that wood[6] was of this dede,
Shoop[7] him an ost on Antony to lede
Al-outerly for his destruccioun,
With stoute Romains, cruel as leoun;
To ship they wente, and thus I let hem saile.
Antonius was war, and wol nat faile
To meten with thise Romains, if he may;
Took eek his reed, and bothe, upon a day,
His wyf and he, and al his ost, forth wente
To shippe anoon, no lenger they ne stente;
And in the see hit happed hem to mete.
Up goth[8] the trompe, and for to shoute and shete,[9]
And peynen hem to sette on with the sonne.[10]
With grisly soun out goth[11] the grete gonne,
And heterly[12] they hurtlen[13] al at ones,
And fro the top[14] doun cometh the grete stones.
In goth the grapenel so ful of crokes
Among the ropes, and the shering-hokes.
In with the polax presseth he and he;
Behind the mast beginneth he to flee,
And out agayn, and dryveth him overborde;
He stingeth him upon his speres orde;[15]

[4] recked. [5] weight. [6] angry. [7] Shaped, i.e. prepared. [8] sounds. [9] shoot, loose infinitive. [10] To attack with the sun at their back. [11] off goes. [12] ferociously. [13] clash together. [14] station up on the mast. [15] point.

He rent the sail with hokes lyke a sythe;
He bringeth the cuppe, and biddeth hem be blythe;
He poureth pesen upon the hacches slider;[1]
With pottes ful of lym[2] they goon to-gider;
And thus the longe day in fight they spende
Til, at the last, as every thing hath ende,
Antony is shent,[3] and put him to the flighte,
And al his folk to-go,[4] that best go mighte.
Fleeth eek the queen, with al her purpre sail,
For strokes, which that wente as thikke as hail;
No wonder was, she mighte hit nat endure.
And whan that Antony saw that aventure,
'Alas!' quod he, 'the day that I was born!
My worshipe in this day thus have I lorn!'
And for dispeyr out of his witte he sterte,
And roof[5] him-self anoon through-out the herte
Er that he ferther wente out of the place.
His wyf, that coude of Cesar have no grace,
To Egipte is fled, for drede and for distresse.
But herkneth, ye that speke of kindenesse,
Ye men, that falsly sweren many an ooth
That ye wol dye, if that your love be wrooth,
Heer may ye seen of women whiche a trouthe!
This woful Cleopatre hath mad swich routhe
That ther nis tonge noon that may hit telle.
But on the morwe she wol no lenger dwelle,
But made hir subtil werkmen make a shryne
Of alle the rubies and the stones fyne
In al Egipte that she coude espye;
And putte ful the shryne of spycerye,
And leet the cors embaume; and forth she fette
This dede cors, and in the shryne hit shette.
And next the shryne a pit than doth she grave;
And alle the serpents that she mighte have,

[1] Apparently "pours peas upon the slippery deck," i.e. to make the deck slippery. But v. *Kittredge Anniversary Papers*, p. 149, for another explanation.
[2] Loose quicklime to blind the enemy.
[3] ruined. [4] disperse. [5] pierced.

She putte hem in that grave, and thus she seyde:
'Now love, to whom my sorweful herte obeyde
So ferforthly that, fro that blisful houre
That I yow swor to been al frely youre,
I mene yow, Antonius my knight!
That never waking, in the day or night,
Ye nere out of myn hertes remembraunce
For wele or wo, for carole or for daunce;
And in my-self this covenant made I tho,
That, right swich as ye felten, wele or wo,
As ferforth as hit in my power lay,
Unreprovable unto my wyfhood ay,
The same wolde I felen, lyf or deeth.
And thilke covenant, whyl me lasteth breeth,
I wol fulfille, and that shal wel be sene;
Was never unto hir love a trewer quene.'
And with that word, naked, with ful good herte,
Among the serpents in the pit she sterte,
And ther she chees to han hir buryinge.
Anoon the neddres gonne hir for to stinge,
And she hir deeth receyveth, with good chere,
For love of Antony, that was hir so dere:—
And this is storial sooth,[6] hit is no fable.
Now, er I finde a man thus trewe and stable,
And wol for love his deeth so freely take,
I pray God lat our hedes never ake!

Explicit Legenda Cleopatrie, Martiris.

THE LEGEND OF LUCRETIA

Incipit Legenda Lucrecie Rome, Martiris.

Now moot I seyn the exiling of kinges
Of Rome, for hir horrible doinges,
And of the laste king Tarquinius,
As saith Ovyde and Titus Livius.
But for that cause telle I nat this storie,
But for to preise and drawen to memorie
The verray wyf, the verray trewe Lucresse,
That, for her wyfhood and her steadfastnesse,
Nat only that thise payens her comende,
But he, that cleped is in our legende

[6] historical truth.

The grete Austin,[1] hath greet compassioun
Of this Lucresse, that starf at Rome toun;
And in what wyse, I wol but shortly trete,
And of this thing I touche but the grete.[2]
Whan Ardea beseged was aboute
With Romains, that ful sterne were and stoute,
Ful longe lay the sege, and litel wroghte,[3]
So that they were half ydel, as hem thoghte;
And in his pley Tarquinius the yonge
Gan for to jape, for he was light of tonge,
And seyde, that 'It was an ydel lyf;
No man did ther no more than his wyf;
And lat us speke of wyves, that is best;
Praise every man his owne, as him lest,
And with our speche lat us ese our herte.'
A knight, that highte Colatyne, up sterte,
And seyde thus, 'Nay, for hit is no nede
To trowen on the word, but on the dede.
I have a wyf,' quod he, 'that, as I trowe,
Is holden good of alle that ever her knowe;
Go we to-night to Rome, and we shul see.'
Tarquinius answerde, 'That lyketh me.'
To Rome be they come, and faste hem dighte[4]
To Colatynes hous, and doun they lighte,
Tarquinius, and eek this Colatyne.
The husbond knew the estres[5] wel and fyne,
And prively into the hous they goon;
Nor at the gate porter was ther noon;
And at the chambre-dore they abyde.
This noble wyf sat by her beddes syde
Dischevele, for no malice she ne thoghte;
And softe wolle our book seith that she wroghte
To kepen her fro slouthe and ydelnesse;
And bad her servants doon hir businesse,
And axeth hem, 'What tydings heren ye?
How seith men of the sege, how shal hit be?
God wolde the walles weren falle adoun;
Myn husbond is so longe out of this toun,

[1] St. Augustine in his *City of God*. [2] main points.
[3] The beleaguering was long and ineffective.
[4] repaired. [5] rooms.

For which the dreed doth me so sore smerte,
Right as a swerd hit stingeth to myn herte
Whan I think on the sege or of that place;
God save my lord, I preye him for his grace:' —
And ther-with-al ful tenderly she weep,
And of her werk she took no more keep,
But mekely she leet her eyen falle;
And thilke semblant sat her wel with-alle.
And eek her teres, ful of honestee,
Embelisshed her wyfly chastitee;
Her countenaunce is to her herte digne,
For they acordeden in dede and signe.
And with that word her husbond Colatyn,
Or she of him was war, com sterting in,
And seide, 'Dreed thee noght, for I am here!'
And she anoon up roos, with blisful chere,
And kiste him, as of wyves is the wone.[6]
Tarquinius, this proude kinges sone,
Conceived[7] hath her beautee and her chere,
Her yelow heer, her shap, and her manere,
Her hew, her wordes that she hath compleyned,
And by no crafte her beautee nas nat feyned;
And caughte to this lady swich desyr,
That in his herte brende as any fyr
So woodly, that his wit was al forgeten.
For wel, thoghte he, she sholde nat be geten;
And ay the more that he was in dispair,
The more he coveteth and thoghte her fair.
His blinde lust was al his covetinge.
A-morwe, whan the brid began to singe,
Unto the sege he comth ful privily,
And by himself he walketh sobrely,
Th' image of her recording alwey newe;
'Thus lay her heer, and thus fresh was her hewe;
Thus sat, thus spak, thus span; this was her chere,
Thus fair she was, and this was her manere.'
Al this conceit his herte hath now y-take.
And, as the see, with tempest al to-shake,
That, after whan the storm is al ago,
Yet wol the water quappe[8] a day or two,
Right so, thogh that her forme wer absent,
The plesaunce of her forme was present;

[6] wont, custom. [7] Perceived. [8] be tempestuous.

But natheles, nat plesaunce, but delyt,
Or an unrightful talent [1] with despyt;
'For, maugre her,[2] she shal my lemman [3] be;
Hap helpeth hardy man alday,' [4] quod he;
'What ende that I make, hit shal be so;'
And girt him with his swerde, and gan to go;
And forth he rit [5] til he to Rome is come,
And al aloon his wey than hath he nome [6]
Unto the house of Colatyn ful right.
Doun was the sonne, and day hath lost his light;
And in he com un-to a privy halke,[7]
And in the night ful theefly [8] gan he stalke,
Whan every wight was to his reste broght,
Ne no wight had of tresoun swich a thoght.
Were hit by window or by other gin,[9]
With swerde y-drawe, shortly he cometh in
Ther as she lay, this noble wyf Lucresse.
And, as she wook, her bed she felte presse.
'What beste is that,' quod she, 'that weyeth thus?'
'I am the kinges sone, Tarquinius,'
Quod he, 'but and thou crye, or noise make,
Or if thou any creature awake,
By thilke God that formed man on lyve,
This swerd through-out thyn herte shal I ryve.'
And ther-withal unto her throte he sterte,
And sette the point al sharp upon her herte.
No word she spak, she hath no might therto.
What shal she sayn? her wit is al ago.
Right as a wolf that fynt [10] a lomb aloon,
To whom shal she compleyne, or make moon?
What! shal she fighte with an hardy knight?
Wel wot men that a woman hath no might.
What! shal she crye, or how shal she asterte
That hath her by the throte, with swerde at herte?
She axeth grace, and seith al that she can.
'Ne wolt thou nat,' quod he, this cruel man,
'As wisly [11] Jupiter my soule save,
As I shal in the stable slee thy knave,
And leye him in thy bed, and loude crye,
That I thee finde in suche avouterye;[12]
And thus thou shalt be deed, and also lese [13]
Thy name, for thou shalt none other chese.'
Thise Romain wyves loveden so hir name
At thilke tyme, and dredden so the shame,
That, what for fere of slaundre and drede of deeth,
She loste bothe at-ones wit and breeth,
And in a swough [14] she lay and wex so deed,
Men mighte smyten of her arm or heed;
She feleth no-thing, neither foul ne fair.
Tarquinius, that art a kinges eyr,
And sholdest, as by linage and by right,
Doon as a lord and as a verray knight,
Why hastow doon dispyt to chivalrye?
Why hastow doon this lady vilanye?
Allas! of thee this was a vileins dede!
But now to purpos; in the story I rede,
Whan he was goon, al this mischaunce is falle.
This lady sente after her frendes alle,
Fader, moder, husbond, al y-fere; [15]
And al dischevele, with her heres clere,
In habit swich as women used tho
Unto the burying of her frendes go,
She sit in halle with a sorweful sighte.
Her frendes axen what her aylen mighte,
And who was deed? And she sit ay wepinge,
A word for shame ne may she forth outbringe,
Ne upon hem she dorste nat beholde.
But atte laste of Tarquiny she hem tolde,
This rewful cas, and al this thing horrible.
The wo to tellen hit were impossible,
That she and alle her frendes made atones.[16]
Al hadde folkes hertes been of stones,
Hit mighte have maked hem upon her rewe,
Her herte was so wyfly and so trewe.
She seide, that, for her gilt ne for her blame,
Her husbond sholde nat have the foule name,
That wolde she nat suffre, by no wey.
And they answerden alle, upon hir fey,
That they forveve hit her, for hit was right;
Hit was no gilt, hit lay nat in her might;
And seiden her ensamples many oon.
But al for noght; for thus she seide anoon,
'Be as be may,' quod she, 'of forgiving,
I wol nat have no forgift [17] for no-thing.'

1 passion. 2 in spite of herself. 3 mistress.
4 Fortune always favors the brave. 5 rideth.
6 taken. 7 corner. 8 like a thief. 9 contrivance.
10 findeth. 11 So sure as.
12 adultery. 13 lose. 14 swoon.
15 together. 16 at once. 17 forgiveness.

But prively she caughte forth a knyf,
And therwith-al she rafte her-self her lyf;
And as she fel adoun, she caste her look,
And of her clothes yit she hede took;
For in her falling yit she hadde care
Lest that her feet or swiche thing lay bare;
So wel she loved clennesse and eek trouthe.
Of her had al the toun of Rome routhe,
And Brutus by her chaste blode hath swore
That Tarquin sholde y-banisht be ther-fore,
And al his kin; and let the peple calle,
And openly the tale he tolde hem alle,
And openly let carie her on a bere
Through al the toun, that men may see and here
The horrible deed of her oppressioun.
Ne never was ther king in Rome toun
Sin thilke day; and she was holden there
A seint, and ever her day y-halwed dere
As in hir lawe: and thus endeth Lucresse,
The noble wyf, as Titus bereth witnesse.
I tell hit, for she was of love so trewe,
Ne in her wille she chaunged for no newe.
And for the stable herte, sad and kinde,
That in these women men may alday finde;
Ther as they caste hir herte, ther hit dwelleth.
For wel I wot, that Crist him-selve telleth,
That in Israel, as wyd as is the lond,
That so gret feith in al the lond he ne fond
As in a woman; and this is no lye.
And as of men, loketh which tirannye
They doon alday; assay hem who so liste,
The trewest is ful brotel[1] for to triste.

Explicit Legenda Lucrecie Rome, Martiris.

[1] brittle.

MINOR POEMS

CHAUCERS WORDES UNTO ADAM, HIS OWNE SCRIVEYN[1]

ADAM scriveyn, if ever it thee bifalle
Boece or Troilus to wryten newe,
Under thy lokkes thou most have the scalle,[2]
But[3] after my making thou wryte trewe.
So ofte a daye I mot thy werk renewe,
Hit to correcte and eek to rubbe and scrape;
And al is through thy negligence and rape.[4]

THE FORMER AGE

A BLISFUL lyf, a paisible and a swete
Ledden the peples in the former age;
They helde hem payed[5] of fruites, that they ete,
Which that the feldes yave hem by usage;
They ne were nat forpampred with outrage;[6]
Unknowen was the quern[7] and eek the melle;[8]
They eten mast, hawes, and swich pounage,[9]
And dronken water of the colde welle.

Yit nas the ground nat wounded with the plough,
But corn up-sprong, unsowe of mannes hond,
The which they gniden,[10] and eete nat half y-nough.
No man yit knew the forwes[11] of his lond;
No man the fyr out of the flint yit fond;
Un-korven and un-grobbed[12] lay the vyne;
No man yit in the morter spyces grond
To clarre,[13] ne to sause of galantyne.[14]

No mader, welde, or wood no litestere
Ne knew;[15] the flees was of his former hewe;
No flesh ne wiste offence of egge[16] or spere;
No coyn ne knew man which was fals or trewe;
No ship yit karf the wawes grene and blewe;
No marchaunt yit ne fette outlandish[17] ware;
No trompes for the werres folk ne knewe,
No toures heye, and walles rounde or square.

What sholde it han avayled to werreye?[18]
Ther lay no profit, ther was no richesse;
But cursed was the tyme, I dar wel seye,
That men first dide hir swety bysinesse
To grobbe up metal, lurkinge in darknesse,
And in the riveres first gemmes soghte.
Allas! than sprong up al the cursednesse
Of covetyse, that first our sorwe broghte!

Thise tyraunts putte hem gladly nat in pres
No wildnesse[19] ne no busshes for to winne
Ther poverte is, as seith Diogenes,
Ther as vitaile is eek so skars and thinne
That noght but mast or apples is therinne.
But, ther as bagges been and fat vitaile,
Ther wol they gon, and spare for no sinne
With al hir ost the cite for t'assaile.

Yit were no paleis-chaumbres, ne non halles;
In caves and [in] wodes softe and swete
Slepten this blissed folk with-oute walles,
On gras or leves in parfit quiete.
No doun of fetheres, ne no bleched shete
Was kid[20] to hem, but in seurtee they slepte;
Hir hertes were al oon, with-oute galles,
Everich of hem his feith to other kepte.

Unforged was the hauberk and the plate;[21]
The lambish[22] peple, voyd of alle vyce,
Hadden no fantasye to debate,[23]
But ech of hem wolde other wel cheryce;[24]

[1] scrivener, scribe. [2] scab. [3] Unless. [4] destructiveness. [5] pleased. [6] spoiled by pampering with excessive luxury. [7] hand-mill. [8] mill. [9] swine's food. [10] bruised. [11] furrows. [12] Unpruned and uncultivated. [13] For spiced wine. [14] Galantine was an elaborate fish-sauce.

[15] No dyer knew the use of madder, weld, or woad — three dye-plants.

[16] edge, knife. [17] foreign. [18] fight. [19] wilderness. [20] known. [21] plate-armor. [22] innocent. [23] no inclination to contend. [24] cherish.

No pryde, non envye, non avaryce,
No lord, no taylage [1] by no tyrannye;
Humblesse and pees, good feith, the emperice,
[Fulfilled erthe of olde curtesye.] [2]

Yit was not Jupiter the likerous,[3]
That first was fader of delicacye,[4]
Come in this world; ne Nembrot,[5] desirous
To reynen, had nat maad his toures hye.[6]
Allas, allas! now may men wepe and crye!
For in our dayes nis but covetyse
[And] doublenesse, and tresoun and envye,
Poysoun, manslauhtre, and mordre in sondry wyse.

MERCILES BEAUTE: A TRIPLE ROUNDEL

I. CAPTIVITY

YOUR yën two wol slee me sodenly,
I may the beautè of hem not sustene,
So woundeth hit through-out my herte kene.

And but your word wol helen hastily
My hertes wounde, whyl that hit is grene,
Your yën two wol slee me sodenly,
I may the beautè of hem not sustene.

Upon my trouthe I sey yow feithfully,
That ye ben of my lyf and deeth the quene;
For with my deeth the trouthe shal be sene.
Your yën two wol slee me sodenly,
I may the beautè of hem not sustene,
So woundeth hit through-out my herte kene.

II. REJECTION

So hath your beautè fro your herte chaced
Pitee, that me ne availeth not to pleyne;
For Daunger halt [7] your mercy in his cheyne.

Giltles my deeth thus han ye me purchaced;
I sey yow sooth, me nedeth not to feyne;
So hath your beautè fro your herte chaced
Pitee, that me ne availeth not to pleyne.

Allas! that nature hath in yow compassed
So greet beautè, that no man may atteyne
To mercy, though he sterve for the peyne.

So hath your beautè fro your herte chaced
Pitee, that me ne availeth not to pleyne;
For Daunger halt your mercy in his cheyne.

III. ESCAPE

Sin I fro Love escaped am so fat,
I never thenk to ben in his prison lene;
Sin I am free, I counte him not a bene.

He may answere, and seye this or that;
I do no fors,[8] I speke right as I mene.
Sin I fro Love escaped am so fat,
I never thenk to ben in his prison lene.

Love hath my name y-strike out of his sclat,[9]
And he is strike out of my bokes clene
For ever-mo; ther is non other mene.
Sin I fro Love escaped am so fat,
I never thenk to ben in his prison lene;
Sin I am free, I counte him not a bene.

TRUTH [10]

FLEE fro the prees, and dwelle with sothfastnesse,
Suffyce unto thy good,[11] though hit be smal;
For hord hath hate, and climbing tikelnesse,[12]
Prees hath envye, and wele blent [13] overal;
Savour [14] no more than thee bihove shal;
Werk wel thy-self, that other folk canst rede;
And trouthe shal delivere, hit is no drede.[15]

Tempest [16] thee noght al croked to redresse,
In trust of hir that turneth as a bal: [17]
Gret reste stant in litel besinesse;
And eek be war to sporne ageyn an al;[18]
Stryve noght, as doth the crokke [19] with the wal.
Daunte [20] thy-self, that dauntest otheres dede;
And trouthe shal delivere, hit is no drede.

That thee is sent, receyve in buxumnesse,[21]
The wrastling for this worlde axeth a fal.

[1] taxation. [2] Line supplied by Skeat. [3] lustful. [4] sinful luxury. [5] Nimrod. [6] i.e. Babel. [7] Disdain holdeth.

[8] I care not. [9] slate.

[10] It has recently been shown that this exhortation was addressed to a conspicuously busy and ambitious associate of Chaucer's, Sir Philip la Vache. See *Modern Philology*, xi, p. 209.

[11] Be satisfied with your possessions. [12] precariousness. [13] success blindeth. [14] Relish. [15] without doubt. [16] Vex. [17] i.e. Fortune. [18] kick against an awl. [19] pitcher. [20] Subdue. [21] submission.

Her nis non hoom, her nis but wildernesse:
Forth, pilgrim, forth! Forth, beste, out of thy stall!
Know thy contree, look up, thank God of al;
Hold the hye wey, and lat thy gost thee lede:
And trouthe shal delivere, hit is no drede.

ENVOY

Therfore, thou vache,[1] leve thyn old wrecchednesse
Unto the worlde; leve now to be thral;
Crye him mercy, that of his hy goodnesse
Made thee of noght, and in especial
Draw unto him, and pray in general
For thee, and eek for other, hevenlich mede;
And trouthe shal delivere, hit is no drede.

Explicit Le bon counseill de G. Chaucer.

GENTILESSE

THE firste stok, fader of gentilesse—[2]
What man that claymeth gentil for to be,
Must folowe his trace, and alle his wittes dresse
Vertu to sewe,[3] and vyces for to flee.
For unto vertu longeth dignitee,
And noght the revers, saufly dar I deme,
Al were[4] he mytre, croune, or diademe.

This firste stok was ful of rightwisnesse,
Trewe of his word, sobre, pitous, and free,
Clene of his goste, and loved besinesse,
Ageinst the vyce of slouthe, in honestee;
And, but his heir love vertu, as dide he,
He is noght gentil, thogh he riche seme,
Al were he mytre, croune, or diademe.

Vyce may wel be heir to old richesse;
But ther may no man, as men may wel see,
Bequethe his heir his vertuous noblesse
That is appropred unto no degree,
But to the firste fader in magestee,
That maketh his heir him that can him queme,[5]
Al were he mytre, croune, or diademe.

[1] Cow, beast, a play on la Vache's name. His crest was a cow's hoof.
[2] The original gentle-man. These words without corresponding verb supply the antecedent to *his* in line 3.
[3] follow. [4] Though he wear. [5] please.

LAK OF STEDFASTNESSE

BALADE

SOM tyme this world was so stedfast and stable,
That mannes word was obligacioun,
And now hit is so fals and deceivable,
That word and deed, as in conclusioun;
Ben no-thing lyk, for turned up so doun
Is al this world for mede and wilfulnesse,
That al is lost for lak of stedfastnesse.

What maketh this world to be so variable,
But lust that folk have in dissensioun?
Among us now a man is holde unable,
But-if he can, by som collusioun,
Don his neighbour wrong or oppressioun.
What causeth this, but wilful wrecchednesse,
That al is lost, for lak of stedfastnesse?

Trouthe is put doun, resoun is holden fable;
Vertu hath now no dominacioun;
Pitee exyled, no man is merciable.
Through covetyse is blent[6] discrecioun;
The world hath mad a permutacioun
Fro right to wrong, fro trouthe to fikelnesse,
That al is lost, for lak of stedfastnesse.

LENVOY TO KING RICHARD

O prince, desyre to be honourable,
Cherish thy folk and hate extorcioun!
Suffre no thing, that may be reprevable
To thyn estat, don in thy regioun.
Shew forth thy swerd of castigacioun,
Dred God, do law, love trouthe and worthinesse,
And wed thy folk agein to stedfastnesse.

LENVOY DE CHAUCER A SCOGAN

TO-BROKEN been the statuts hye in hevene
That creat were eternally to dure,
Sith that I see the brighte goddes sevene[7]
Mow wepe and wayle, and passioun endure,
As may in erthe a mortal creature.
Allas, fro whennes may this thing procede?
Of whiche errour I deye almost for drede.

By worde eterne whylom was hit shape
That fro the fifte cercle, in no manere,
Ne mighte a drope of teres doun escape.

[6] blinded. [7] the planets.

But now so wepeth Venus in hir spere,
That with hir teres she wol drenche us here.
Allas, Scogan! this is for thyn offence!
Thou causest this deluge of pestilence.[1]

Hast thou not seyd, in blaspheme of this goddes,
Through pryde, or through thy grete rakelnesse,[2]
Swich thing as in the lawe of love forbode is?
That, for thy lady saw nat thy distresse,
Therfor thou yave hir up at Michelmesse!
Allas, Scogan! of olde folk ne yonge
Was never erst Scogan blamed for his tonge!

Thou drowe in scorn Cupyde eek to record
Of thilke rebel word that thou hast spoken,
For which he wol no lenger be thy lord.
And, Scogan, thogh his bowe be nat broken,
He wol nat with his arwes been y-wroken[3]
On thee, ne me, ne noon of our figure;[4]
We shul of him have neyther hurt ne cure.

Now certes, frend, I drede of thyn unhappe,
Lest for thy gilt the wreche of Love procede
On alle hem that ben hore and rounde of shape,
That ben so lykly folk in love to spede.
Than shul we for our labour han no mede;
But wel I wot, thou wilt answere and seye:
'Lo! olde Grisel list to ryme and pleye!'

Nay, Scogan, sey not so, for I m'excuse,
God help me so! in no rym, doutelees,
Ne thinke I never of slepe wak my muse,
That rusteth in my shethe stille in pees.
Whyl I was yong, I putte hir forth in prees,
But al shal passe that men prose or ryme;
Take every man his turn, as for his tyme.

[1] This wretched deluge. Perhaps alluding to the floods of 1393. [2] rashness. [3] wreaked, revenged. [4] i.e. portly figure, cf. l. 31.

ENVOY

Scogan, that knelest at the stremes heed[5]
Of grace, of alle honour and worthinesse,
In th'ende of which streme I am dul as deed,
Forgete in solitarie wildernesse;[6]
Yet, Scogan, thenke on Tullius kindenesse,
Minne[7] thy frend ther it may fructifye!
Far-wel, and lok thou never eft Love defye!

THE COMPLEINT OF CHAUCER TO HIS EMPTY PURSE

To you, my purse, and to non other wight
Compleyne I, for ye be my lady dere!
I am so sory, now that ye be light;
For certes, but ye make me hevy chere,
Me were as leef be leyd up-on my bere;
For whiche un-to your mercy thus I crye:
Beth hevy ageyn, or elles mot I dye!

Now voucheth sauf this day, or hit be night,
That I of you the blisful soun may here,
Or see your colour lyk the sonne bright,
That of yelownesse hadde never pere,
Ye be my lyf, ye be myn hertes stere,[8]
Quene of comfort and of good companye:
Beth hevy ageyn, or elles mot I dye!

Now purs, that be to me my lyves light,
And saveour, as doun in this worlde here,
Out of this toune help me through your might,
Sin that ye wole nat been my tresorere;
For I am shave as nye as any frere.
But yit I pray un-to your curtesye:
Beth hevy ageyn, or elles mot I dye!

LENVOY DE CHAUCER

O conquerour[9] of Brutes Albioun!
Which that by lyne and free eleccioun
Ben verray king, this song to you I sende;
And ye, that mowen al our harm amende,
Have minde up-on my supplicacioun!

[5] Probably Windsor, where the court was. [6] Probably Greenwich. [7] Remember. [8] steersman. [9] Henry IV, 1399.

THOMAS HOCCLEVE

EXTRAVAGANCE IN MEN'S DRESS

(*The Regement of Princes*, §§ 61–77)

But this me thinkith an abusioun,
To se on[1] walke in gownes of scarlet,
xii yerdes wyd, with pendant sleves downe
On the grounde, and the furrour therin set
Amountyng unto twenty pound or bet; [2]
And if he for it payde have, he no good
Hath lefte him where-with for to bye an hood.

For thogh he jette [3] forth among the prees,
And overloke everey pore wight,
His cofre and eke his purs ben penylees,
He hath no more than he goth in ryght.[4]
For lond, rent, or catel,[5] he may go light;
The weght of hem schal not so moche peyse [6]
As doth his gowne. Is swiche array to preyse?

Nay sothely, sone, it is al amys me thinkyth;
So pore a wight his lord to counterfete
In his array, in my conceyit it stynkith.
Certes to blame ben the lordes grete,
If that I durste seyn, that hir men lete
Usurpe swiche a lordly apparaille,
Is not worth, my childe, withouten fayle.

Som tyme, afer men myghten lordes knowe
By there array, from other folke; but now
A man schal stody and musen a long throwe [7]
Whiche is whiche: O lordes, it sit [8] to yowe
Amende this, for it is for youre prowe.[9]
If twixt yow and youre men no difference
Be in array, lesse is youre reverence.

Also ther is another newe get,[10]
A foul wast of cloth and an excessyf;
Ther goth no lesse in a mannes tipet
Than of brood cloth a yerde, by my lif;
Me thynkyth this a verray inductif
Unto stelthe: ware hem of Hempen Lane!
For stelthe is medid with a chekelew bane.[11]

Let evere lord, his owne men deffende [12]
Swiche gret array, and than, on my peryl,
This land within a while schal amende.
In Goddys name, putte it in exyl!
It is synne outragious and vyl;
Lordes, if ye your estat and honour
Loven, fleemyth [13] this vicius errour!

What is a lord withouten his meynee?
I putte cas that his foos hym assaile
Sodenly in the stret. What help schale he,
Wos sleeves encombrous so syde [14] traille,
Do to his lord? He may hym nat availle;
In swych a cas he nys but a womman;
He may nat stand hym in steed of a man.

His armys two han ryght ynow to done,
And sumwhat more, his sleeves up to holde;
The taillours, trow I, moot heerafter soone
Shape in the feeld; thay shal nat sprede and folde
On hir bord, thogh thei never so fayn wolde,
The cloth that shal ben in a gowne wroght;
Take an hool cloth is best, for lesse is noght.

The skynner unto the feeld moot also,
His hous in London is to streyt and scars
To doon his craft; sum tyme it was nat so.
O lordes, yeve unto your men hir pars [15]
That so doon, and aqwente hem bet with Mars,
God of bataile; he loveth non array
That hurtyth manhode at preef [16] or assay.

Who now moost may bere on his bak at ones
Of cloth and furrour, hath a fressch renoun;
He is "a lusty man" clept for the nones;
But drapers and eek skynners in the toun,
For swich folk han a special orisoun

1 one, people. 2 better. 3 strut. 4 merely.
5 personal property, chattels, money. 6 weigh.
7 while. 8 belongs. 9 profit. 10 fashion.
11 Stealing is rewarded by a choking death.
12 forbid. 13 banish. 14 wide.
15 parts, portions. 16 proof.

That troppid[1] is with curses heere and there,
And ay schal, til thei paid be for hir gere.

In dayes olde, whan smal apparaille
Suffisid unto hy estat or mene,
Was gret houshold wel stuffid of victaille;
But now housholdes ben ful sclender and lene,
For al the good that men may repe or glene,
Wasted is in outrageous array,
So that housholdes men nat holde may.

Pryde hath wel lever bere an hungry mawe
To bedde, than lakke of array outrage;
He no prys settith be mesures lawe,
Ne takith of hym clothe, mete, ne wage:
Mesure is out of londe on pylgrymage;
But I suppose he schal resorte as blyve,[2]
For verray neede wol us therto dryve.

Ther may no lord tak up no newe gyse
But that a knave shal the same up take.
If lordes wolden in this wyse,
For to do swiche gownes to hem make
As men did in old tyme, I undertake
The same jet[3] sholde up be take and usid,
And al this costelew outrage[4] refusid.

Of Lancastre Duk Iohn, whos soule in Hevene
I fully deme, and truste sit ful hye —
A noble prince I may allegge and nevene,[5]
(Other may no man of hym testifye) —
I never sy a lord that cowde hym gye[6]
Bet like his estat; al knyghtly prowesse
Was to hym girt: O God! his soule blisse!

His garnamentes weren noght ful wyde,
And yit thei hym becam wonderly wel.
Now wolde God the waast of cloth and pryde
Y-put were in exyl perpetuel
For the good and profet universel.
And lordes myght helpe al this, if thei wolde
The olde jet take, and it furth use and holde.

Than myghte silver walke more thikke
Among the peple than that it doth now;
Ther wold I fayne that were y-set the prikke,[7] —
Nat for my self; I schal doo wel ynow, —
But, sone, for that swiche men as thow
That with the world wrastlen, myght han plente
Of coyn, where as ye han now scarsetee.

Now hath thise lordes but litil neede of broomes
To swepe away the filthe out of the street,
Syn syde sleves of penylees gromes
Wile it up likke, be it drye or weet.
O Engelond! stand upryght on thy feet!
So foul a wast in so symple degree
Bannysshe! or sore it schal repente the.

BADBY'S HERESY[8]

(*The Regement of Princes*, §§ 41–47)

Som man, for lak of occupacioun,
Museth forther thanne his wyt may strecche,
And, at the fendes instigacioun,
Dampnable errour holdeth, and can not flecche[9]
For no counseil ne reed, as dide a wrecche
Not fern[10] agoo, whiche that of heresye
Convyct, and brent was un-to ashen drye.

The precious body of oure lorde Jhesu
In forme of brede, he leved[11] not at al;
He was in no thing abassht, ne eschu
To seye it was but brede material;
He seyde, a prestes power was as smal
As a rakers,[12] or swiche an other wighte,
And to mak it, hadde no gretter myght.

My lorde the prince[13] — God him save and blesse! —
Was at his deedly castigacioun,
And of his soule hadde grete tendernesse,
Thristynge sore his savacioun:
Grete was his pitous lamentacioun,
Whan that this renegat not wolde blynne[14]
Of the stynkyng errour that he was inne.

[8] John Badby was burned at Smithfield in 1410. This extract shows the feelings of a temperate, intelligent person regarding heresy.

[1] sprinkled. [2] very quickly. [3] fashion. [4] costly extravagance. [5] name. [6] guide. [7] aim. [9] escape. [10] long. [11] believed. [12] street-cleaner. [13] Prince Hal, later Henry V. [14] cease.

This good lorde highte hym to be sweche a mene [1]
To his fader, oure lige lorde sovereyne,
If he renounce wolde his errour clene,
And come un-to oure good byleve ageyne,
He schulde of his lif seure ben and certeyne,
And sufficiant lyflode [2] eek scholde he have,
Un-to the day he clad were in his grave.

Also this nobyl prince and worthy knyght—
God quyte hym his charitable labour!—
Or any stikke kyndled were or light,
The sacrement, oure blissed Saveoure,
With reverence grete and hye honoure
He fecche leet, this wrecche to converte,
And make oure feithe to synkyn in his herte.

But al for noght, it wolde not bytyde;
He heeld forth his oppynyoun dampnable,
And cast oure holy cristen feith a-syde,
As he that was to the fende acceptable.
By any outward tokyn resonable,
If he inward hadde any repentaunce,
That wote he, that of no thing hath doutaunce.

Lat the divines of hym speke and muse
Where his soule is by-come, or whider gon;
Myn unkonyng of that me schal excuse,
Of whiche matere knowleche have I non.
But wolde God, tho Cristes foos echon
That as he heelde were i-served soo,
For I am seur that ther ben many moo.

WOMAN'S SUPERIORITY

(*The Regement of Princes*, §§ 728–742)

Ther is also a pees inordinat,
Whan the gretter obeith to the lesse;
And thus, whan to his soget [3] a prelat
Obeyeth; and whan reson the blyndnesse
Sueth [4] of sensualitees madnesse,
Obeying it: al swich pees is haynous,
For it is goode pees contrarious.

Right swich a pees, Adam had with Eve
Whan that he unto hir desire obeyde;
He was, per caas,[5] adradde for to greve;
Wherefor he did as that she to hym seide:
In that obedience he foleyde,[6]
For God hir him bytoke [7] him to obeye;
But I adrad am that I thus fer seye;

If that this come unto the audience
Of women, I am sure I shal be shent: [8]
For that I touche of swich obedience,
Many a browe shal on me be bent;
Thei wolden waite to ben equipollent,[9]
And sumwhat more, unto hir housbondis,
And sum men seyn swich vsage in this lond is.

And it no wonder is, as semeth me,
Whan that I me bethought have al aboute,
Thoght that women desiren sovereynte,
And hir housbondes make to hem loute;[10]
Thei made were of a ribbe, it is no doute,
Which more strong is, and substancial,
Than slyme of eerthe, and clenner therwithal.

Wherfor it semeth that the worthynesse
Of women, passyth mennes encerteyne; [11]
And yit sum nyse [12] men, of lewdenesse,[13]
In repref of hem holden ther-a-geyn,
For crokid was that ribbe; and speke and seyne,
That also crokid is hir curtaisie;
But agayn that, strongly wil I replie;

For in the writyng and in the scripture
Of philosophers, men may see and reede,
Cercly [14] shap is most perfite figure,
Bitokenyng, in gemetrie, onhede;[15]
And crokydnesse a part is, that may lede
Sumwhat unto cercle or a cumpas:
What so men seyen, women stonde in gode caas.

For therby shewith it, that crokydnesse
Streccheth unto the gretter perfeccioun
Than doth a thing that is of evenesse;
Of this helpith no contradiccioun,
For it soth is; it is no ficcioun;

[1] Promised to be such an intermediary.
[2] livelihood. [3] subject. [4] Follows.
[5] perchance. [6] did folly. [7] gave her to him.
[8] undone. [9] of equal power. [10] bow. [11] certainly.
[12] silly. [13] ignorance. [14] circular. [15] oneness.

Every perfit body that man kan nevene,
Is rounde and crokyd, and noght streghte ne evene.

Bygynne first at Heven, and rounde it is;
The sonne and mone, and the sterres also;
Hed of man, then mouth, and hert, I-wisse,
Ben alle rounde; and othir ben ther moo
Than I expresse as now; but or I goo,
Yit shal I bet wommannes part sustene;
So biddeth pees, and that to folwe I mene.

Now for to speke or touchen of the place
In which that man and womman fourmed were:
Almyghty God to womman shope swich grace,
That she was formed in the worthier;
In Paradys men wot wel he made here;
But man ymade was out of Paradys,
In place of lesse worthinesse and prys.

And of the maner of formacioun
Of bothe two herkenth now wel I prey;
The token or the significacioun
Of making of Adam, may be no way
Strecche to so perfyte a goode, I say,
As dide the formacioun of Eve;
And that as swithe here I schal it preve.

For more have I for hir partye yit:
Making of Eve tokned the makyng
Of holy chirche, and sacramentes of it;
As of the syde of Adam, him slepyng,
Eve was made, so our lorde Crist deyeng
Upon the crois, holy chirche of his syde,
And the sacramentes, made were in that tyde.

From tyme eeke Crist was of xii yere age
Unto thritty, he with his modir ay
Was servyng hir with right plesant corage;
To teche humilite, he tooke the way
Fro Heven hiddir, and mekenesse verray
Taught he, the moste partie of his lyf,
Whil he was with his modir and his wyfe;

For she was bothe two; and syn she had
So long of hir housbonde the maystrie,
Women, I trowe, be nat now so mad
That style to forgo; nay, swich folye,
What man that can in a woman espye,
Is worthi shryned be; God save hem alle,
And graunt hir hye corage nat to palle!

Holy writ seith, 'If women sovereynte
Of hir housbondes have, how that thei
Unto housbondes contrarious be:'
The text is such, I woot wel, but what thei?[1]
That text I undirstonde thus alwey:
Whan that housbondes hem mystake and erre,
Ageyn that vice wyves maken werre.

Thogh a woman hir housbonde contrarie
In his oppynyoun erroneous,
Shul men for that deme hir his adversarie?
Straw! be he never so harrageous,[2]
If he and she shul dwellen in on house,
Goode is he suffre; therby pees may spring;
Housbondes pees is pesible suffryng.

TRIBUTES TO CHAUCER AND GOWER

(*The Regement of Princes*, §§ 267, 280–283, 297–301, 712–716)

'What schal I calle the? What is thi name?'
'Hoccleve, fadir myn, men clepen me.'
'Hoccleve, sone?' 'I-wis, fadir, that same.'
'Sone, I have herd, or this, men speke of the;
Thou were aqueynted with Caucher,[3] pardee—
God have his soule best of any wyght!—
Sone, I wole holde the that I have hyght.'[4]
. . . . . .
'With hert as tremblyng as the leef of aspe,[5]
Fadir, syn[6] ye me rede[7] to do so,
Of my symple conceyt wole I the claspe
Undo, and lat it at his large go.[8]
But weylaway! so is myn herte wo,
That the honour of Englyssh tonge is deed,
Of which I wont was han[9] consail and reed.

[1] though. [2] violent. [3] Chaucer. [4] what I have promised. [5] aspen. [6] since. [7] counsel. [8] let it go free. [9] to have.

'O, maister deere, and fadir reverent!
Mi maister Chaucer, flour of eloquence,
Mirour of fructuous entendement,[1]
O, universel fadir in science!
Allas! that thou thyn excellent prudence
In thi bed mortel mightist naght byqwethe;
What eiled Deth? Allas! whi wolde he sle the?

'O Deth! thou didest naght harme singuleer
In slaghtere of him; but al this land it smertith;
But nathelees, yit hast thou no power
His name sle; his hy vertu astertith[2]
Unslayn fro the, which ay us lyfly hertyth,[3]
With bookes of his ornat endytyng,
That is to al this land enlumynyng.

'Hast thou nat eeke my maister Gower slayn,
Whos vertu I am insufficient
For to descreyve? I wrote wel in certayn,
For to sleen al this world thou haast yment;
But syn our lorde Crist was obedient
To the, in feith I can no ferther seye;
His creatures mosten the obeye.'
. . . . . .
Simple is my goost, and scars my letterure,[4]
Unto your excellence for to write
Myn inward love, and yit in aventure
Wyle I me putte, thogh I can but lyte.
Mi dere maistir — God his soule quyte! —
And fadir, Chaucer, fayn wolde han me taght;
But I was dul, and lerned lite or naght.

Allas! my worthi maister honorable,
This landes verray tresor and richesse,
Deth, by thi deth, hath harme irreparable
Unto us doon; hir vengeable duresse[5]
Despoiled hath this land of the swetnesse
Of rethorik; for un-to Tullius
Was never man so lyk a-monges us.

Also, who was hier[6] in philosophie
To Aristotle, in our tonge, but thow?
The steppes of Virgile in poesie
Thow filwedist[7] eeke. Men wot wel y-now
That combre-world that the, my maistir, slow.
Wold I slayn were! Deth was to hastyf
To renne on the, and reve the thi lyf.

Deth hath but smal consideracioun
Unto the vertuous, I have espied,
No more, as shewith the probacioun,
Than to a vicious maistir losel tried;[8]
A-mong an heep, every man is maistried
With hire, as wel the porre as is the riche;
Lered and lewde eeke standen al y-liche.

She myghte han taried hir vengeance awhile,
Til that sum man had egal to the be.
Nay, lat be that! sche knew wel that this yle
May never man forth brynge lyk to the,
And hir office needes do mot she;
God bad hir so, I truste as for thi beste;
O maister, maister, God thi soule reste!
. . . . . .
The firste fyndere of our faire langage,
Hath seyde in caas semblable, and othir moo,
So hyly wel, that it is my dotage
For to expresse or touche any of thoo.[9]
Alasse! my fadir fro the worlde is goo —
My worthi maister Chaucer, hym I mene —
Be thou advoket for hym, hevenes quene!

As thou wel knowest, o blissid virgyne,
With lovyng hert and hye devocioun
In thyne honour he wroot ful many a lyne;
O now thine helpe and thi promocioun,
To God thi sone make a mocioun,
How he thi servaunt was, mayden Marie,
And lat his love floure and fructifie.

Al-though his lyfe be queynt,[10] the resemblaunce
Of him hath in me so fressh lyflynesse,
That, to putte othir men in remembraunce

[1] beneficial understanding, intelligence.
[2] escapes. [3] always heartens us vigorously.
[4] learning. [5] cruelty. [6] heir.
[7] didst follow.
[8] one proved a vicious master rascal.
[9] those. [10] quenched.

Of his persone, I have heere his lyknesse
Do make, to this ende in sothfastnesse,
That thei that have of him lest thought and mynde,
By this peynture may ageyn him fynde.[1]

The ymages that in the chirche been,
Maken folk thenke on God and on his seyntes,
Whan the ymages thei be-holden and seen;
Were[2] oft unsyte[3] of hem causith restreyntes
Of thoughtes gode: whan a thing depeynt is,
Or entailed,[4] if men take eef it heede,
Thoght of the lyknesse it wil in hem brede.

Yit somme holden oppynyoun, and sey
That none ymages schuld I-maked be:
Thei erren foule, and goon out of the wey;
Of trouth have thei scant sensibilite.
Passe over that: now, blessid Trinite,
Uppon my maistres soule, mercy have,
For him, Lady, eke thi mercy I crave.

ROUNDEL TO SOMER THE CHANCELLOR

The sonne, with his bemes of brightnesse,
To man so kyndly is, and norisshynge,
That lakkyng it day nere but dirknesse:
To day he yeveth his enlumynynge,
And causith al fruyt for to wexe and sprynge:
Now, syn that sonne may so moche availl,
And moost with Somer is his soiournynge,
That sesoun bounteous we wole assaill.

Glad-cheerid Somer, to your governaille
And grace we submitte al our willynge!
To whom yee freendly been he may nat faille
But he shal have his reasonable axynge:
Aftir your good lust,[5] be the sesonynge
Of our fruytes this laste Mighelmesse,
The tyme of yeer was of our seed ynnynge,[6]
The lak of which is our greet hevynesse.

We truste up-on your freendly gentillesse,
Ye wole us helpe and been our supportaille.
Now yeve us cause ageyn this Cristemesse
For to be glad, o lord, whethir our taille[7]
Shal soone make us with our shippes saille
To port salut. If yow list we may synge;
And elles, moot us bothe mourn and waille,
Till your favour us sende releevygne.

We, your servantes, Hoccleve and Baillay,
Hethe and Offorde, yow beseeche and preye,
Haasteth our hervest as soone as yee may!
For fere of stormes our wit is aweye;
Were our seed inned wel we mighten pleye,
And us desporte and synge and make game,
And yit this rowndel shul we synge and seye
In trust of yow and honour of your name.

Somer, that rypest mannes sustenance
With holsum hete of the sonnes warmnesse,
Al kynde of man thee holden is to blesse!

Ay thankid be thy freendly governance,
And thy fressh look of mirthe and of gladnesse!
Somer etc.

To hevy folk of thee the remembraunce
Is salve and oynement to hir seeknesse.
For why we thus shul synge in Cristemesse,
Somer etc.

BALADE TO MY GRACIOUS LORD OF YORK[8]

Go, little pamfilet, and streight thee dresse
Unto the noble rootid gentillesse
Of the myghty Prince of famous honour,
My gracious Lord of York, to whose noblesse
Me recommande with hertes humblesse,
As he that have his grace and his favour
Fownden alway; for which I am dettour
For him to preye; and so shal my symplesse
Hertily do unto my dethes hour.

Remembre his worthynesse, I charge thee,
How ones at London, desired he,
Of me that am his servant, and shal ay,

[1] Here follows the famous portrait of Chaucer.
[2] Where, whereas. [3] not seeing. [4] carved.
[5] pleasure. [6] harvest, i.e. payment.
[7] tally. [8] The father of Edward IV.

To have of my balades swich plentee
As ther weren remeynynge unto me;
And for nat wole I to his will seyn nay,
But fulfille it as ferfoorth as I may,
Be thow an owter[1] of my nycetee,[2]
For my good lordes lust, and game, and play.

My lord beseeke eek in humble maneere,
That he nat souffre thee for to appeere
In th'onurable sighte, or the presence,
Of the noble Princesse and lady deere,
My gracious lady, my good lordes feere,[3]
The mirour of wommanly excellence.
Thy cheer is naght, ne haast noon eloquence
To moustre[4] thee before hir yen cleere:
For myn honour were holsum thyn absence.[5]

Yit ful fayn wolde I have a messageer
To recommande me, with herte enteer,
To hir benigne and humble wommanhede;
And at the tyme have I noon othir heer
But thee; and smal am I, for thee, the neer,[6]
And if thow do it nat, than shal that dede
Be left and that nat kepte I, out of drede.
My lord, nat I, shal have of thee poweer.
Axe him a licence; upon him crie and grede![7]

Whan that thow hast thus doon, than aftirward
Byseeche thou that worthy Prince Edward,
That he thee leye apart for what may tyde,
Lest thee beholde my Maister Picard.
I warne thee that it shal be full hard
For thee and me to halte on any syde,
But he espie us.—Yit, no force,[8] abyde!
Let him looke on; his herte is to me-ward
So freendly that our shame wole he hyde.

If that I in my wrytynge foleye,[9]
As I do ofte (I can it nat withseye),
Meetrynge amis[10] or speke unfittyngly,
Or nat by just peys[11] my sentences weye,
And nat to the ordre of endytyng obeye,
And my colours[12] sette ofte sythe awry,—
With al myn herte wole I buxumly,
It to amende and to correct, him preye;
For undir his correccioun stande I.

Thow foul book, unto my lorde seye also,
That pryde is unto me so greet a fo,
That the spectacle forbedith he me,[13]
And hath y-doon of tyme yore ago;
And for my sighte blyve[14] hastith me fro,
And lakkith that that sholde his confort be,
No wonder thogh thow have no beautee.
Out upon pryde, causer of my wo!
My sighte is hurt thurgh hir adversitee.

Now ende I thus. The holy Trinitee,
And our Lady, the blissid mayden free,
My lord and lady have in governance!
And graunte hem joie and hy prosperitee,
Nat to endure oonly two yeer or three,
But a thousand! and if any plesance
Happe mighte, on my poore souffissance,
To his prowesse and hir benignitee,
My lyves ioie it were, and sustenance!
Cest tout.

THE COMPLAINT

THE PROLOG

After that hervest inned had his sheves,
And that the broune season of Myhelmesse
Was come, and gan the trees robbe of ther leves,
That grene had bene and in lusty freshnesse,
And them in-to colowre of yelownesse
Hadd dyen and doune throwne undar foote,
That chaunge sank into myne herte roote.

For freshely browght it to my remembraunce,
That stablenes in this worlde is there none;
There is no thinge but chaunge and variaunce;
How welthye a man be, or well begone,[15]
Endure it shall not; he shall it forgon.
Deathe under fote shall hym thrist adowne:
That is every wites conclusyon.[16]

Whiche for to weyve[17] is in no mannes myght,
How riche he be, stronge, lusty, freshe, and gay.
And in the ende of Novembar, upon a nyght,

1 utterer. 2 folly. 3 companion, mate. 4 show.
5 Thy absence would be good for my honor.
6 little the nearer. 7 call. 8 no matter.
9 utter folly. 10 making false metre.
11 weight, poise. 12 rhetorical decorations.

13 Will not let me wear spectacles. Hoccleve mentions them again in his poem *To Sir John Oldcastle*, l. 417.
14 swiftly. 15 situated. 16 man's end. 17 avoid.

Syghenge sore as I in my bed lay,
For this and othar thowghts, whiche many a day
Before I toke, sleape came none in myne eye,
So vexyd me the thowghtfull maladye.

I see well, sythen I with sycknes[1] last
Was scourged, clowdy hath bene the favoure
That shone on me full bright in tymes past;
The sonne abatid and the derke showre
Hildyd[2] downe right on me; and in langour
He made me swyme, so that my wite
To lyve no lust hadd, ne no delyte.

The grefe abowte my harte so sore swal,[3]
And bolned[4] ever to and to so sore,
That nedes oute I muste there-with-all;
I thowght I nolde it kepe cloos no more,
Ne lett it in me for to olde and hore;[5]
And for to preve I cam of a woman,
I brast oute on the morowe and thus began.

(*Here endythe my prologe and folowythe my complaynt.*)

Allmyghty God as lykethe his goodnes,
Visytethe folks alday as men may se,
With lose of good and bodily sikenese,
And amonge othar he forgat not me;
Witnes upon[6] the wyld infirmytie[7]
Which that I had, as many a man well knewe,
And whiche me owt of my selfe cast and threw.

It was so knowen to the people and kouthe,
That cownsell[8] was it none, ne none be myghte.
How it with me stode was in every mans mowthe,
And that full sore my fryndes affrighte.
They for myne helthe pilgrimages highte,[9]
And sowght them, some on hors and some on foote, —
God yelde it them — to geten me my bote.[10]

But althowghe the substaunce of my memory
Wente to pley as for a certayne space,
Yet the Lorde of Vertew, the Kynge of Glory,

[1] The insanity spoken of below. [2] Poured.
[3] swelled. [4] raged. [5] grow old and hoary.
[6] As is shown by. [7] His insane fit.
[8] secret. [9] promised. [10] cure.

Of his highe myght and his benynge grace,
Made it to returne into the place
Whennes it cam; whiche at all-hallwemesse,
Was five yeere, neyther more ne lesse.

And evere sythen — thanked be God owr Lord
Of his good reconsiliacion, —
My wyt and I have bene of such accorde
As we were or[11] the alteracion
Of it was. But by my savacion,
Sith that tyme have I be sore sett on fire,
And lyved in great torment and martire;

For thowgh that my wit were home come agayne,
Men wolde it not so understond or take;
With me to deale hadden they dysdayne;
A ryotows person I was and forsake;
Myn olde frindshipe was all ovarshake;
No wyte withe me lyst make daliance;
The worlde me made a straunge continance.[12]

HOCCLEVE'S GAY YOUTH

(*La Male Regle*, §§ 16–26)

THE outward signe of Bachus and his lure,
That at his dore hangith day by day
Excitith folk to taaste of his moisture
So often that man can nat wel seyen nay.
For me, I seye I was enclyned ay
Withouten daunger[13] thidir for to hye me.
But if swich charge upon my bake lay,
That I moot it forbere as for a tyme;

Or but I were nakidly bystad[14]
By force of the penylees maladie,
For thanne in herte kowde I nat be glad,
Ne lust had noon to Bachus hows to hie.
Fy! Lak of coyn departith conpaignie;
And hevy purs, with herte liberal,
Qwenchith the thirsty hete of hertes drie,
Wher chynchy[15] herte hath therof but smal.

I dar nat telle how that the fresshe repeir
Of Venus femel lusty children deere,
That so goodly, so shaply were, and feir,
And so pleasant of port and of maneere,

[11] before. [12] countenance. [13] hesitation.
[14] in great straits. [15] stingy.

And feede cowden al a world with cheere,
And of atyr passyngly wel byseye,[1]
At Poules Heed me maden ofte appeere,
To talks of mirthe and to disporte and pleye.

Ther was sweet wyn ynow thurghout the hous,
And wafres thikke, for this conpaignie
That I spak of been sumwhat likerous,[2]
Where as they mowe a draght of wyn espie,
Sweete and in wirkynge hoot for the maistrie[3]
To warme a stomak with, thereof they dranke.
To suffre hem paie had been no courtesie:
That charge I tooke to wynne love and thanke.

Of loves aart yit touchid I no deed;
I cowde nat and eek it was no neede:
Had I a kus I was content ful weel,
Bettre than I wolde han be with the deede:
Ther-on can I but smal, it is no dreede:[4]
Whan that men speke of it in my presence:
For shame I wexe as reed as is the gleede.[5]
Now wole I torne ageyn to my sentence.

Of him that hauntith taverne of custume,
At shorte wordes the profyt is this:
In double wyse his bagge it shal consume,
And make his tonge speke of folk amis;
For in the cuppe seelden fownden is
That any wight his neigheburgh commendith.
Beholde and see what avantage is his,
That God, his freend, and eek himself, offendith.

But oon avauntage in this cas I have:
I was so ferd with any man to fighte,
Cloos kept I me; no man durst I deprave[6]
But rownyngly,[7] I spak no thyng on highte.

And yit my wil was good, if that I mighte,
For lettynge of my manly cowardyse,
That ay of strookes impressid the wighte,[8]
So that I durste medlen in no wyse.

Wher was a gretter maister eek than y,
Or bet aqweyntid at Westmynstre yate,
Among the taverneres namely,
And cookes whan I cam eerly or late?
I pynchid[9] nat at hem in myn acate,[10]
But paied hem as that they axe wolde;
Wherfore I was the welcomere algate,[11]
And for a verray gentil man y-holde.

And if it happid on the someres day
That I thus at the taverne hadde be,
Whan I departe sholde and go my way
Hoom to the privee seel,[12] so wowed me
Heete and unlust and superfluitee
To walke unto the brigge and take a boot,
That nat durste I contrarie hem all three,
But did as that they stired me, God woot.

And in the wyntir, for the way was deep,
Unto the brigge I dressid me also,
And ther the bootmen took upon me keep,[13]
For they my riot[14] kneewen fern ago:
With hem was I i-tugged to and fro,
So wel was him that I with wolde fare;
For riot paieth largely everemo;
He styntith nevere til his purs be bare.

Othir than 'maistir' callid was I nevere,
Among this meynee,[15] in myn audience.
Me thoghte I was y-maad a man for evere:
So tikelid me that nyce reverence,
That it me made larger of despense
Than that I thoght han been o flaterie!
The guyse of thy traiterous diligence
Is, folk to mescheef haasten and to hie.

[1] provided. [2] fond of good fare.
[3] excellent, sovereign. [4] doubt. [5] glowing coal.
[6] speak slightingly of. [7] whispering.
[8] Which impressed [on me] the weight of strokes.
[9] quibble as to price. [10] purchasing.
[11] always. [12] The office of the Privy Seal.
[13] paid attention to me. [14] extravagance.
[15] servile throng.

JOHN LYDGATE

THE CHURL AND THE BIRD[1]

Problemys of olde likenesse and figures,
Whiche proved been fructuous of sentence,[2]
And hath auctorite grownded in scriptures,
By resemblaunces of nobille apparence,
Withe moralites concluding of prudence,
Like as the Bibylle rehersithe by writing,
How trees somtyme chase[3] hemself a kyng.

First in their choise thay named the olive,
To reigne amonge hem, Judicum[4] dothe expresse,
But he hym dide excuse blyve,[5]
He myght not forsake his fatnesse,
Ner the figge tree his amorows swettnes,
Ner the vyne his holsom fressh tarage,[6]
Whiche yeveth comforte to al maner age.

And semlably[7] poetis laureate,
By dyrke parables ful convenient,
Feyne that birddis and bests of estate,
As royalle egles and lyons be assent,
Sent out writtes to olde[8] a parliament,
And made decres brefly for to saye,
Some for to have lordshippe and some for obeye.

Egles in the heyre[9] highest to take hir flighte,
Power of lyouns on the grounde is sene,
Cedre among trees highest of sight,
And the laurealle of nature is ay grene;
Of flowres also Flora goddes and quene;
Thus of al thing ther beene diversites,
Some of estate and some of lowe degres.

Poetes writin wonderfulle liknesses,
And under covert kepe hemself ful closse;
They take bestis and fowles to witnesse,
Of whos feyninges fabilles first arosse.
And here I cast unto my purpose,
Out of the Frenssh a tale to translate,
Whiche in a paunflet I redde and saw but late.

This tale whiche I make of mencioun,
In gros reherseth playnly to declare,
Thre proverbis payed for raunsoun,
Of a faire birdde that was take out of a snare,
Wondir desirous to scape out of hir care,
Of my autour folwyng the processe,
So as it fel, in order I shal expresse.

Whilom ther was in a smal village,
As myn autor makethe rehersayle,
A chorle[10] whiche hadde lust and a grete corage,[11]
Within hymself be diligent travayle
To array his gardeyn withe notable apparayle,
Of lengthe and brede yeliche[12] square and longe,
Hegged and dyked to make it sure and strong.

Alle the aleis were made playne with sond,
The benches turned with newe turvis grene,
Sote herbers,[13] withe condite[14] at the honde,
That wellid up agayne the sonne shene,
Lyke silver stremes as any cristale clene,
The burbly wawes in up boyling,
Rounde as byralle ther beamys out shynynge.

Amyddis the gardeyn stode a fressh lawrer,[15]
Theron a bird syngyng bothe day and nyghte,
With shynnyng fedres brightar than the golde weere,[16]
Whiche with hir song made hevy hertes lighte,
That to beholde it was an hevenly sighte,
How toward evyn and in the daw[e]nyng,
She ded her payne most amourously to synge.

[1] A favorite Old-French tale, perhaps of oriental origin. See J. O. Halliwell's remarks in his edition of Lydgate's Minor Poems, Percy So., vol. II, p. 179, whence our text.
[2] fruitful in teaching. [3] chose. [4] *Judges*, ix. [5] at once. [6] flavor. [7] similarly. [8] hold. [9] air.
[10] churl, boor. [11] inclination. [12] alike. [13] Sweet arbors. [14] fountain. [15] laurel. [16] wire.

Esperus enforced hir corage,[1]
Toward evyn whan Phebus gan to west,
Amid[2] the braunches to hir avauntage
To synge hir complyn[3] and than go to rest;
And at the rysing of the quene Alcest,[4]
To synge agayne, as was hir due,
Erly on morowe the day sterre to salue.

It was a verray hevenly melodye,
Evyne and morowe to here the byrddis songe,
And the soote sugred armonye,
Of uncouthe[5] warblys and tunys drawen on longe,
That al the gardeyne of the noyse rong,
Til on a morwe, whan Tytan shone ful clere,
The birdd was trapped and kaute with a pantere.[6]

The chorle was gladde that he this birdde hadde take,
Mery of chere, of looke, and of visage;
And in al haste he cast for to make,
Within his house a pratie litelle cage,
And with hir songe to rejoise his corage,
Til at the last the sely birdde abrayed,[7]
And sobirly unto the chorle she sayde.

'I am now take and stand undir daunger,[8]
Holde straite that I may not fle.
Adieu, my songe and alle notes clere,
Now that I have lost my liberte;
Now am I thralle that somtyme was fre,
And trust while I stand in distresse,
I canne not synge ner make gladnesse.

'And thowe my cage forged were with golde,
And the pynacles of birrale and cristale,
I remembre a proverd said of olde,
"Who lesethe his fredam, in faith! he loseth all;"
For I hadd levyr upon a braunche smale,
Mekely to singe amonge the wodes grene,
Than in a cage of silver brighte and shene.

'Songe and prison have noon accordaunce;
Trowest thou I wolle syng in prisoun?
Song procedethe of joy and of pleasaunce,
And prison causethe dethe and destruccioun;
Ryngyng of fetires makethe no mery sounde,
Or how shuld he be gladde or jocounde
Agayne his wylle, that ligthe in chayne bounde?

'What avaylethe it a lyon to be kyng
Of bestes, alle shette in a towre of stone?
Or an egle, undir strayte kepying,
Called also king of fowles everichone?
Fy on lordshippe whan liberte is gone!
Answere herto and lat it not asterte,[9]
Who syngeth merily that syngeth not of herte?

'But if thou wilte rejoise of my syngyng,
Lat me go flye free from al daunger;
And every day in the mornyng,
I shall repayre unto thi lawrer,
And freshly syng withe lusty notes clere,
Undir thy chambire or afore thyne halle,
Every season whane thou list me calle.

'To be shett up and pynned undir drede,
No thing accordethe unto my nature,
Thouhe I were fedde with mylke and wastelbrede,[10]
And soote cruddes[11] browte unto my pasture,
Yet had I lever to do my besy cure,
Herly in the morowe to shrapyn[12] in the vale,
To fynde my dyner amonge the wormes smale.

'The laborare is gladdare at his ploughe,
Herly on morne to fede hym withe bacon,
Than som man is that hathe tresoure i-noughe,
And of alle deyntes plente and foison,[13]
And no fredom with his possessioun
To go at large, but as bere to stake[14]
To passe his boundis but if he leve take.

'Take this aunswere for full conclusion —
To synge in prison thou shalt me not constrayne,
Till I have fredom in wodis up and downe,
To flien at large on boughes rouhe[15] and playne;

[1] Hesperus prompted her.
[2] Halliwell reads *And*, but the emendation seems to be required by the sense.
[3] compline, last service of the day.
[4] Alcestes is here a constellation of the dawn. In Chaucer's *Legend of Good Women* (Prol. A 507) she is the daisy (day's eye). Cf. Schick's note to l. 70 of *The Temple of Glas*.
[5] rare. [6] large bird-net. [7] started up. [8] control.
[9] escape, be avoided. [10] The finest sort of bread.
[11] sweet curds. [12] scrape. [13] abundance.
[14] a bear bound to a stake. [15] rough.

And of resoun thou shuldest not disdayne,
Of my desire laugh and have game;[1]
But who is a chorle wolde eche a[2] man were the same.'

'Wele,' quod the chorle, 'syth it will not be
That I desire as be[3] thy talkyng,
Magry[4] thi will thou shalt chese on of thre:[5]
Withinne a cage merily to synge,
Or to the kechen I shal thy body bringe,
Pulle thi fedris that bene so bright and clere,
And aftir the rooste and baake to my dyner.'

'Than,' quod the birdde, 'to reson saye not nay,
Towching my songe a fulle aunswer thou haste;
And when my fedres pulled been away,
Yf I be rosted, outher bake in paste,
Thou shalt of me have a fulle smal repaste;
But yf thou wilt werke by my counseille,
Thou mayest by me have passing gret availe.[6]

'Yf thou wil unto my rede assent,
And suffre me go frely fro prisoun,
Without raunsoun or ony other rent,
I shal the yeve a notable gret gwerdoun,
Thre grete wysdoms according to resoun,
More of valewe, take hede what I do profre,
Thane all the golde that is shet in thi cofre.

'Trust me wele I shal the not disceyve.'
'Wele,' quod the chorle, 'telle oon, anone let se.'
'Nay,' quod the byrdde, 'thou must afore conceyve,
Who that shal teche must of reason go free;
It sittethe a maister to have his liberte,
And at large to teche his lesson.
Have me not suspecte, I mene no tresone.'

'Well,' quod the chorle, 'I holde me content,
I trust the promys which thou hast made to me.'
The birdde fley forthe, the chorle was of assent;
And toke hir flight upon the lawreer tre.
Than thought she thus, 'Now I stand fre,
With snares panters I cast[7] not al my lyve,
Ner withe no lyme-twygges ony more to stryve.

'He is a fole that scaped is daunger,
And broken his fedres[8] and fled is fro prisoun,
For to resorte,[9] for brent childe dredethe fire.
Eche a man beware of wisdom and resoun,
Of sugre strowed that hydethe fals poyson;
Ther is no venome so parlious in sharpnes,
As whan it hathe of treacle[10] a lyknes.

'Who dredeth no parelle,[11] in parelle he shal falle;
Smothe waters ben ofte sithes depe;
The quayle-pype can moste falsly calle,
Till the quayle undir the net doth crepe;
Ablery-eed fowler trust not though he wepe;
Eschewe his thombe, of weping take noon hede,
That smale birddes can nype be the hede.

'And now that I such daungers am escaped,
I wil be ware and afore provide,
That of no fowler I wil no more be japed,[12]
From their lyme-twygges I will flee fer asyde;
Where perell is, gret perelle is to abyde.—
Come nere, thou chorle, take hede to my speeche,
Of thre wisdomes that I shal the teche.

'Yeve not of wisdom to hasty credence
To every tale nor to eche tyding;
But considre of resoun and prudence,
Among many talis is many gret lesyng;[13]
Hasty credence hathe caused gret hyndring;
Reporte of talis, and tydinges broute up newe,
Makethe many a man to beholde untrewe.

'For oon partie take this for thy raunsoun:
Lerne the secund grownded in scripture,
Desire thou nott be no condicioun
Thing which is impossible to recure;[14]
Wordly desires stand alle in adventure,

[1] Nor laugh to scorn my desire. [2] every.
[3] "That which I desire concerning." [4] Maugre.
[5] Why "three"? Possibly "*thre*" should be "*the*," these. But we have *three* returns offered by the bird presently. [6] use.
[7] reckon. [8] For "fetres," fetters? [9] return.
[10] medicinal syrup. [11] peril. [12] deceived. [13] lie.
[14] obtain.

And who desire to clymbe highe on lofte,
By soden torne felethe ofte his fal unsofte.

'The thirdde is this; beware bothe even and morowe,
Forgete it not, but lerne this of me:
For tresoure loste maketh never to gret sorowe,
Which [1] in no wise may not recovered be;
For who takthe sorowe for losse in that degre,
Reknethe first his losse and aftir rekyn his peyne,
And of oon sorowe makethe he sorowes tweyne.'

Aftir this lessone the birdde begane a songe,
Of hir escape gretly rejoysing,
And she remembryng also the wronge
Don by the chorle first at hir takynge,
Of hir affray and hir enprisonyng;
Gladde that she was at large and out of drede,
Said unto hym, hovyng [2] above his hedde:

'Thou were,' quod she, 'a very naturall fole
To suffre me departe of thy lewdnesse; [3]
Thou owghtest oft to complayne and make dole,
And in thyne herte to have gret hevynesse,
That thou hast loste so passing gret richesse,
Whiche myght suffice, by valewe in rekenyng,
To pay the raunsoum of a myghty kynge.

'There is a stone whiche called is jagounce, [4]
Of olde engendered withinne myne entrayle,
Whiche of fyne golde peyssethe [5] a gret unce, [6]
Cytryne [7] of colour, lyke garnettes of entayle, [8]
Which maketh men victorious in batayle,
And so [9] ever bere on hym this stone
Is fully assured agayne his mortal foone.

'Who hathe this stone in possession,
Shal suffre no povert, ner no indigence,
But of al tresour have plente and foysoun,
And every man shal do hym reverence;
And no ennemy shal do hym offence.

[1] The antecedent of *which* is *tresoure*. [2] poising. [3] ignorance. [4] a kind of gem. [5] weighs. [6] ounce. [7] yellow. [8] cut. [9] "Who" is perhaps lost before *so*.

But from thyne handis now that I am gone,
Pleyne if thou wilt, for thi parte is none.

'It causeth love, it makethe men more gracious
And favorable in every mannys sighte;
It makethe accorde betwne folke envyous,
Comforteth sorowfull, and maketh heavy herttes lighte;
Lyke topasion [10] of colours sonnyssh bright;
I am a foole to telle al at ones,
Or to teche a chorle the price of precious stones.

'Men shuld not put a precious margarite, [11]
As rubies, saphires, or othir stones hynde, [12]
Emeraudes ner [13] rounde perles whight,
To-fore rude swyne that loven d[r]affe [14] of kynde;
For a sowe delightethe, as I fynde,
More in foule draffe hir pigges for to glade,
That in al the perre [15] that comethe out of Garnade. [16]

'Eche thing draueth unto his semlable, [17]
Fysshes on the see, bestes on the stronde,
The eyere for fowllis of nature is convenable,
To a ploughe man to tille the lande,
And a chorle a mokeforke [18] in his hande;
I lese my tyme ony more to tarye,
To telle a bowen [19] of the lapidarye. [20]

'That thou haddest, thou gettest never agayne;
Thi lym-twigges and panters I defye:
To lete me go thou ware foule over sayne, [21]
To lese thi richesse only of foly.
I am now fre to syng, and to flye
Where that me lust, and he is a foole at alle, [22]
That gothe at large and makethe himselff thralle.

'To here a wisdom thyn eres been half deef,
Lyke an asse that listithe on an harppe;
Thou mayst go pype in an yve-leffe;
Better is to me to synge on thornes sharppe,
Than in a cage withe a chorle to carppe: [23]

[10] topaz. [11] gem. [12] refined, gentle. [13] nor. [14] swill. [15] jewelry. [16] Granada? [17] Birds of a feather flock together. [18] dungfork. [19] For "bower," i.e. boor? Cf. "boueer" below. [20] treatise on gems. [21] it was a great oversight in thee. [22] in all ways. [23] converse, wrangle.

For it was saide of folkes yore a gone,
A chorles chorle is ofte wo begone.'

'The chorle felt his hert parte in twayne,
For verray sorowe, and a-sondire ryve;
'Allas!' quod he, 'I may wele wepe and playne,
As a wreche never leke[1] to thryve,
But for to endure in poverte al my live;
For of foly and of wilfulnesse,
I have now lost al holy my richesse.

'I was a lorde, I crye out of[2] fortune,
And hadde gret tresoure late in my keping,
Whiche myghte have made me long to contynue,
Withe that stone to have lyved leke a kyng;
Yf that I hadde sett it in a ryng,
Borne it on me, I hadde had goode i-nowe,
And never more have neded to goon to the ploughe.'

Whan the birdde sawe the chorle thus morne,
And houghe[3] that he was hevy of his chere,
She toke hir flighte and gayn[4] a-gayne retorne
Towards hym, and said as ye shal here;—
'O dul chorle wysdoms for to lere!
That I the taughte, al is lefte behynde,
Raked away and clene out of mynde.

'Taughte I the not thies wisdam in sentence,—
To every tale broughte to the of newe
Not hastily to yeve therto credence
Into tyme thou knew that it were trewe?
Al is not golde that shynethe goldisshe hewe,
Nor stonys al by nature, as I fynde,
Be not saphires that shewethe colour ynde.[5]

'In this doctryne I loste my laboure,
To teche the suche proverbis of substaunce;
Now mayst thou se thyn owne blynde errour,
For al my body peyssed[6] in balaunce,
Weiethe not an unce; rude is thi remembraunce,
I to have more payce[7] clos in myne entrayle,
Than al my body set for the countirvayle!

'Al my bodye weyeth not an unce,
Hough myght I than have in me a stone,
That peyssith more, as dothe a gret jagounce?
Thy brayne is dul, thy witte is almoste gone;
Of thre wisdoms thou hast forgeten oon,
Thou shuldest not aftir my sentence
To every tale yeve hastily credence.

'I badde also be ware bothe even and morowe,
For thing lost of soden aventure;
Thou shuld not make to mekelle sorowe,
Whan thou seest thou mayst not it recure;[8]
Here thou faylest which doste thi busy cure
In thi snare to kache me agayne;
Thou art a fole, thi labour is in vayne.

'In the thirdde also thou doste rave:
I badde thou shuldest, in no maner wyse,
Coveyte thing whiche thou maist not have,
In whiche thou hast forgoten myne empryse;[9]
That I may sey playnly to devyse,
Thou hast of madnesse forgoten al thre
Notable wysdoms that I taught the.

'It ware but foly withe the more to carpe,[10]
Or to preche of wysdoms more or lasse;
I holde hym madde that bryngeth forth his harppe,
Therone to teche a rude for-dulle[11] asse;
And madde is he that syngeth a fole a masse;
And he is moste madde that dothe his besynesse,
To teche a chorle termys of gentilnesse.

'And semlably in Apprille and in May,
Whan gentille birddes most maketh melodie,
The cokkowe syng can than but oon lay,
In othir tymes she hathe no fantasye;
Thus every thing, as clerks specifye,
As frute and trees, and folke of every degre,
Fro whens they come thei take a tarage.[12]

'The vintere tretethe of his holsom wynes,
Of gentille frute bostethe the gardener,
The fyssher casteth his hokes and his lynes
To kache fyssh in every fressh rever,
Of tilthe of lande tretethe the boueer,[13]
The chorle delitethe to speke of rybaudye,[14]
The hunter also to speke of venerye.

[1] like. [2] upon. [3] how. [4] did. [5] blue. [6] weighed. [7] French *poids*, weight. [8] recover. [9] undertaking. [10] talk. [11] very dull. [12] flavor. [13] farmer. [14] coarse jests.

'Al oon to the a ffaucion and a kyghte,[1]
As goode an howle as a popingaye,[2]
A downghille doke as deynte as a snyghte;[3]
Who servethe a chorle hathe many a carful day.
Adewe! sir chorle, farwele! I flye my way.
O caste[4] me never aftir my lyfe enduring
A-fore a chorle any more to syng.'

Ye folke that shal here this fable, see or rede,
Now forged talis I counsaille you to fle,
For losse of goode takethe not to gret hede,
Bethe not malicious for noon adversite,
Coveitethe no thing that may not be;
And remembre, wherever that ye goone,
A chorles chorle is woo begone.

Unto purpos this proverd is full ryfe,
Rade and reported by olde remembraunce.
A childes birrde and a knavis wyfe
Have often siethe[5] gret sorowe and myschaunce.
Who hathe fredom hathe al suffisaunce;
Bettir is fredom withe litelle in gladnesse,
Than to be thralle withe al worldly richesse.

Go, gentille quayer![6] and recommaunde me
Unto my maister with humble effection;
Beseke hym lowly, of mercy and pite,
Of this rude makyng to have compassion;
And as touching the translacioun
Oute of Frenshe, hough ever the Englisshe be,
Al thing is saide undir correctioun,
With supportacion of your benignite.

THE TEMPLE OF GLAS[7]

For thought, constreint, and grevous hevines,
For pensifhede, and for heigh distres,
To bed I went now this othir nyght,
Whan that Lucina with hir pale light
Was joyned last with Phebus in Aquarie,
Amyd Decembre, when of Januarie
Ther be kalendes of the nwe yere,
And derk Diane, ihorned, nothing clere,
Had hid hir bemys undir a mysty cloude:
Within my bed for sore[8] I gan me shroude,
Al desolate for constreint of my wo,
The longe nyght waloing to and fro,
Til atte last, er I gan taken kepe,[9]
Me did oppresse a sodein dedeli slepe,
With-in the which methoughte that I was
Ravysshid in spirit in a temple of glas—
I nyste[10] how, ful fer in wildirnes—
That foundid was, as bi liklynesse,
Not opon stele, but on a craggy roche,
Like ise ifrore.[11] And as I did approche,
Again the sonne that shone, me thought, so clere
As eny cristal, and ever nere and nere
As I gan neigh this grisli, dredful place,
I wex astonyed: the light so in my face
Bigan to smyte, so persing ever in one
On evere part, where that I gan gone,
That I ne myght nothing, as I would,
Abouten me considre and bihold
The wondre estres,[12] for brightness of the sonne;
Til atte last certein skyes donne,[13]
With wind ichaced, have her cours iwent
To-fore the stremes of Titan and iblent,[14]
So that I myght, with-in and with-oute,
Where so I walk, biholden me aboute,
For to report the fasoun and manere
Of al this place, that was circulere
In compaswise, round bentaile[15] wrought.
And whan that I hade long gone and sought,
I fond a wiket, and entrid in as fast
Into the temple, and myn eighen cast
On evere side, now lowe and eft[16] aloft.
And right anone, as I gan walken soft,
If I the soth aright reporte shal,
I saughe depeynt opon evere wal,
From est to west, ful many a faire image
Of sondri lovers, lich as thei were of age
I-sette in ordre, aftir thei were trwe,
With lifli colours wondir fressh of hwe.
And, as me thought, I saughe somme sit and stonde,
And some kneling with billis in hir honde,
And some with compleint, woful and pitous,
With doleful chere to putten to Venus,
So as she sate fleting in the se,
Upon hire wo forto have pite.

[1] falcon and a kite. [2] parrot. [3] smite i.e. plover or snipe. [4] arrange, plan. [5] time. [6] quire, i.e. book.

[7] From Schick's ed. for the Early English Text Society, London, 1891, with a few typographical changes. This poem is an allegorical "love vision," a kind of writing brought anew into fashion by the French poets of the fourteenth century, and much used by Chaucer and others. Lydgate's poem is of course inspired by Chaucer's *House of Fame*.

[8] sorrow. [9] heed. [10] did not know. [11] frozen. [12] interior rooms. [13] dark clouds. [14] mingled (so as to produce shade). [15] upper part of a wall; exact meaning obscure. [16] again.

And first of al I saugh there of Cartage
Dido the quene, so goodli of visage,
That gan complein hir adventure and caas,
How she deceyved was of Eneas,
For al his hestis and his othis sworne,
And said: 'alas, that ever she was borne,'
Whan that she saugh that ded she moste be.
And next I saugh the compleint of Medee,
Hou that she wes falsed of Iason:
And nygh bi Venus saugh I sit Addoun,
And al the maner, how the bore him slough,
For whom she wepte and hade pein inoughe.
There saugh I also, how Penalope,
For she so long hir lord ne myghte se,
Ful ofte wex of colour pale and grene.
And aldernext[1] was the fresshe quene,
I mene Alceste, the noble trwe wyfe,
And for Admete hou sho lost hir life,
And for hir trouth, if I shal not lie,
Hou she was turnyd to a daiesie.
There was also Grisildis innocence,
And al hir mekenes, and hir pacience.
There was eke Isaude — and meni a nothir mo —
And al the turment, and al the cruel wo,
That she hade for Tristram al hir live.
And hou that Tesbie her herte dide rife
With thilke swerd of him Piramus;
And al the maner, hou that Theseus
The Minatawre slow amyd the hous
That was for-wrynkked[2] bi craft of Dedalus,
When that he was in prison shette in Crete.
And hou that Phillis felt of loves hete
The grete fire of Demophon, alas,
And for his falshed and for his trespas
Upon the walles depeint men myghte se,
How she was honged upon a filbert tre.
And mani a stori, mor then I rekin can,
Were in the tempil, and how that Paris wan
The faire Heleyne, the lusti fresshe quene,
And hou Achilles was for Policene
I-slain unwarli within Troie toune:
Al this sawe I, walkynge up and doun.
Ther sawe I writen eke the hole tale,
Hou Philomene into a nyghtyngale
Iturned was, and Progne unto a swalow;
And how the Sabyns in hir maner halowe
The fest of Lucresse yit in Rome toune.
There saugh I also the sorow of Palamoun,
That he in prison felt, and al the smert,
And how that he, thurugh unto his hert,
Was hurt unwarli thurugh casting of an eyghe
Of faire fressh, the yunge Emelie,

[1] next of all. [2] built as a labyrinth.

And al the strife bitwene him and his brothir,
And hou that one faught eke with that othir
With-in the grove, til thei bi Theseus
Acordid were, as Chaucer tellith us.
And forthirmore, as I gan bihold,
I sawgh how Phebus with an arow of gold
I-woundid was, thurugh oute in his side,
Onli bi envie of the god Cupide,
And hou that Daphne unto a laurer tre
Iturned was, when she dide fle;
And hou that Iove gan to chaunge his cope[3]
Oonli for love of the faire Europe,
And into a bole, when he did hir sue,[4]
List of his godhode his fourme to transmwe;
And hou that he bi transmutacioun
The shap gan take of Amphitrioun
For hir, Almen, so passing of beaute;
So was he hurt, for al his deite,
With loves dart, and myght it not ascape.
There saugh I also hou that Mars was take
Of Vulcanus, and with Venus found,
And with the cheynes invisible bound.
Ther was also al the poesie
Of him, Mercurie and Philologye,[5]
And hou that she, for hir sapience,
Iweddit was to god of eloqence,
And hou the Musis lowli did obeie,
High into heven this ladi to convei,
And with hir song hou she was magnified
With Iubiter to bein istellified.
And uppermore depeint men myghte se,
How with hir ring, goodli Canace
Of evere foule the ledne and the song
Coud undirstond, as she welk hem among;
And hou hir brothir so oft holpen was
In his myschefe[6] bi the stede of bras.
And forthermore in the tempil were
Ful mani a thousand of lovers, here and there,
In sondri wise redi to complein
Unto the goddes, of hir wo and pein,
Hou thei were hindrid, some for envie,
And hou the serpent of fals jelousie
Ful many a lover hath iput o bak,[7]
And causeles on hem ilaid a lak.[8]
And some ther were that pleyned on absence,
That werin exiled and put oute of presence

[3] disguise himself. [4] pursue.
[5] An allusion to the famous didactic allegorical work of Martianus Capella (fifth century), *De Nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii*, mentioned by Chaucer in the *House of Fame*.
[6] distress. [7] aback. [8] alleged some blemish.

Thurugh wikkid tungis and fals suspecioun,
With-oute mercy or remyssyoun.
And other eke her servise spent in vain,
Thurugh cruel daunger, and also bi disdain;
And some also that loved, soth to sein,
And of her ladi were not lovyd again.
And othir eke, that for poverte
Durst in no wise hir grete adversite
Discure[1] ne open, lest thai were refusid;
And some for wanting also werin accusid,
And othir eke that loved secreli,
And of her ladi durst aske no merci,
Lest that she would of hem have despite;
And some also that putten ful grete wite[2]
On double lovers, that love thingis nwe,
Thurgh whos falsnes hindred be the trwe.
And some ther were, as it is ofte found,
That for her ladi meny a blodi wounde
Endurid hath in mani a regioun,
Whiles that an other hath possessioun
Al of his ladi, and berith awai the fruyte
Of his labur and of al his suyte.
And other eke compleyned of Riches,
Hou he with Tresour doth his besines
To wynnen al, againes kynd and ryght,
Wher trw lovers have force noon ne myght.
And some ther were, as maydens yung of age,
That pleined sore with peping[3] and with rage,
That thei were coupled, againes al nature,
With croked elde, that mai not long endure
Forto perfourme the lust of loves plai:
For it ne sit[4] not unto fresshe May
Forto be coupled to oolde Ianuari —
Thei ben so divers that thei moste varie —
For eld is grucching and malencolious,
Ay ful of ire and suspecious,
And iouth entendeth to ioy and lustines,
To myrth and plai and to al gladnes.
'Allas that ever that it shulde fal,
So soote sugre icoupled be with gal!'
These yonge folk criden ofte sithe,
And praied Venus hir pouer forto kithe[5]
Upon this myschef, and shape remedie.
And right anon I herd othir crie
With sobbing teris, and with ful pitous soune,
Tofore the goddes, bi lamentacioun,
That were constrayned in hir tender youthe,
And in childhode, as it is ofte couthe,[6]
Y-entred were into religioun,
Or thei hade yeris of discresioun,
That al her life cannot but complein,
In wide copis perfeccion to feine,
Ful covertli to curen al hir smert,
And shew the contrarie outward of her hert.
Thus saugh I wepen many a faire maide,
That on hir freendis al the wite[7] thei leide.
And other next I saugh there in gret rage,
That thei were maried in her tendir age,
With-oute fredom of eleccioun,
Wher love hath seld domynacioun:
For love, at laarge and at liberte,
Would freli chese, and not with such trete.[8]
And other saugh I ful oft wepe and wring,
That they in men founde swych variynge,
To love a seisoun, while that beaute floureth,
And bi disdein so ungoodli loureth
On hir that whilom he callid his ladi dere,
That was to him so plesaunt and entere;[9]
But lust with fairness is so overgone,
That in her hert trouth abideth none.
And som also I saugh in teris reyne,
And pitousli on God and kynde pleyne,
That ever thei would on eny creature
So much beaute, passing bi mesure,
Set on a woman, to yeve occasioun
A man to love to his confusioun,
And nameli there where he shal have no grace;
For with a loke, forth-bi as he doth pace,
Ful ofte falleth, thurugh casting of an yghe,
A man is woundid, that he most nedis deye,
That never efter peraventure shal hir se.
Whi wil God don so gret a cruelte
To eny man, or to his creature,
To maken him so mych wo endure,
For hir, percaas,[10] whom he shal in no wise
Rejoise never, but so forth in jewise[11]
Ledin his life, til that he be grave.[12]
For he ne durst of hir no merci crave,
And eke peraventure, though he durst and would,
He can not wit, where he hir finde shuld.
I saugh there eke, and therof hade I routhe,
That som were hindred for covetise and slouth,
And some also for her hastines,
And other eke for hir reklesnes —
But alderlast as I walk and biheld,
Beside Pallas with hir cristal sheld,
Tofore the statue of Venus set on height,
How that ther knelid a ladi in my syght

1 reveal. 2 blame. 3 screaming.
4 becomes. 5 show. 6 known.
7 blame. 8 treat, have to do. 9 devoted.
10 perchance. 11 judgment, i.e. sorrow. 12 buried.

Tofore the goddes, which right as the sonne
Passeth the sterres and doth hir stremes donne,[1]
And Lucifer, to voide the nyghtes sorow,
In clerenes passeth erli bi the morow,
And so as Mai hath the sovereinte
Of evere moneth, of fairnes and beaute,
And as the rose in swetnes and odoure
Surmounteth floures, and bawme of al licour
Haveth the pris, and as the rubie bright
Of al stones in beaute and in sight,
As it is know, now the regalie:
Right so this ladi with hir goodli eighe,
And with the stremes of hir loke so bright,
Surmounteth al thurugh beaute in my sighte.
For to tel hir gret semelines,
Hir womanhed, hir port, and hir fairnes,
It was a mervaile, hou ever that nature
Coude in hir werkis make a creature
So aungelike, so goodli on to se,
So femynyn or passing of beaute,
Whos sonnyssh here,[2] brighter than gold were,[3]
Lich Phebus bemys shynyng in his spere —
The goodlihed eke of hir fresshli face,
So replenysshid of beaute and of grace,
So wel ennuyd[4] by Nature and depeint,
That rose and lileis togedir were so meint,[5]
So egalli by good proporcioun,
That, as me thought, in myn inspeccioun
I gan mervaile, hou God, or werk of kynd,
Mighten of beaute such a tresour find,
To yeven hir so passing excellence.
For in goode faith, thurugh hir heigh presence
The tempil was enlumynd enviroun;
And forto speke of condicioun,
She was the best that myghte ben on lyve:
For ther was noon that with hir myghte strive,
To speke of bounte, or of gentilles,
Of womanhed, or of lowlynes,
Of curtesie, or of goodlihed,
Of spech, of chere, or of semlyhed,
Of port benygne, and of daliaunce,
The beste taught; and therto of plesaunce
She was the wel, and eke of oneste
An exemplarie, and mirrour eke was she
Of secrenes, of trouth, of faythfulnes,
And to al other ladi and maistres,
To sue vertu, whoso list to lere.[6]
And so this ladi, benigne and humble of chere,

[1] bedim. [2] sunny hair. [3] wire.
[4] tinted. [5] mingled. [6] teach.

Kneling I saugh, al clad in grene and white,
Tofore Venus, goddes of al delite,
Enbrouded al with stones and perre[7]
So richeli, that joi it was to se,
With sondri rolles on hir garnement,
Forto expoune the trouth of hir entent,
And shew fulli, that for hir humbilles,
And for hir vertu, and hir stabilnes,
That she was rote of womanli plesaunce.
Therfore hir woord withoute variaunce
Enbrouded was, as men myghte se:
'De mieulx en mieulx,' with stones and perre:
This is to sein that she, this benigne,
From bettir to bettir hir herte doth resigne,
And al hir wil, to Venus the goddes,
Whan that hir list hir harmes to redresse.
For as me thought sumwhat bi hir chere,
Forto compleyne she hade gret desire;
For in hir hond she held a litel bil,
Forto declare the somme of al hir will,
And to the goddes hir quarel forto shewe,
Theffect of which was this in wordys fewe:—[8]

NEW TROY

(*The Troy Book*, ll. 479–768)[9]

The sorwe aswaged, and the syghes olde,
By longe processe, liche as I yow tolde,
This worthi kyng, callyd Priamus,
Is in his herte nowe so desyrous,
Up-on the pleyn, that was so waste and wylde,
So strong a toun of newe for to bilde,
At his devyse a cite edefye,
That schal th'assautys outterly defye

[7] gems.

[8] After this the lady, and then the lover, make overlong supplications to Venus, who naturally counsels the lady to accept the devoted service of the knight. The poem ends at line 1403 with "May Lydgate's poem please *his* lady."

[9] Lydgate's *Troy Book* is a version of the celebrated *Historia Trojana* of Guido delle Colonne; that is, it gives the account of Troy which passed current in the Middle Ages — the account received by Chaucer, for example, and the Gawain poet. In this strange and romantic tale the first Troy, Laomedon's, had been destroyed during Priam's absence by Hercules and Jason. It should be noted that London, fabled to have been founded by the Trojans, was sometimes called New Troy by the poets. Our extract gives an interesting mediæval conception of town-planning as it might have been practiced by Edward I and other great founders. Warton in his *History of English Poetry*, London, 1840, vol. II, § 23, has a good description of the Troy Book. Our text is that of Bergen in his edition for the Early English Text Soc., with a few unimportant modifications in typography.

Of alle enmyes, and his mortal foon,
With riche tourys and wallys of hard stoon.
And al aboute the contres environ,
He made seke in every regioun
For swiche werkemen as were corious,
Of wyt inventyf, of castyng[1] merveilous;
Or swyche as coude crafte of gemetrye,
Or wer sotyle in her fantasye;
And for everyche that was good devysour,
Mason, hewer, or crafty quareour;
For every wright and passyng carpenter,
That may be founde, owther fer or nere;
For swyche as koude grave, grope,[2] or kerve,
Or swiche as werne able for to serve
With lym or stoon, for to reise a wal,
With bataillyng and crestis marcial;
Or swiche as had konyng in her hed,
Alabastre, owther white or redde,
Or marbil graye for to pulsche[3] it pleyn,
To make it smothe of veynes and of greyn.
He sent also for every ymagour,
Bothe in entaille,[4] and every purtreyour
That coude drawe, or with colour peynt
With hewes fresche, that the werke nat feynt;[5]
And swiche as coude with countenaunces glade
Make an ymage that wil nevere fade:
To counterfet in metal, tre, or stoon
The sotil werke of Pigmaleoun,
Or of Appollo, the whiche as bokis telle,
In ymagerye alle other dide excelle;
For by his crafty werkyng corious,
The towmbe he made of kyng Daryus
Whiche Alysaundre dide on heyghte reise,
Only for men schuld his fame preise,
In his conquest by Perce whan he went.
And thus Priam for every maister sent,
For eche kerver and passynge joignour,
To make knottis with many corious flour,
To sette on crestis with-inne and with-oute
Up-on the wal the cite rounde aboute;
Or who that wer excellyng in practik
Of any art callyd mekanyk,
Or hadde a name flouryng or famus,
Was after sent to come to Priamus.
For he purposeth, this noble worthi kyng,
To make a cite most royal in byldyng,
Brod, large, and wyde, and lest it were assailed,
For werre proudly abouten enbatailled.

[1] planning, reckoning. [2] groove. [3] polish. [4] engraving. [5] fade.

And first the grounde he made to be sought,
Ful depe and lowe, that it faille nought
To make sure the foundacioun;
In the place where the olde toun
Was first ybilt, he the wallis sette;
And he of lond many myle out mette,[6]
Aboute in compas, for to make it large,
As the maysters that toke on hem the charge
Devysed han the settyng and the syyt,
For holsom eyr to be more of delyt.
And whan the soille, defouled with ruyne
Of walles old, was made pleyn as lyne,
The werkmen gan this cite for to founde,
Ful myghtely with stonys square and rounde,
That in this world was to it noon lyche
Of werkmanschip, nor of bildyng riche,
Nor of crafte of coryous masounry.
I can no termys to speke of gemetrye,
Wherfore as now I muste hem sette a-syde;
For douteles I radde never Euclide,
That the maister and the foundour was
Of alle that werkyn by squyre or compas,
Or kepe her mesour by level or by lyne;
I am to rude clerly to diffyne
Or to discrive this werk in every parte,
For lak of termys longyng to that arte.
But I dar wel of trouthe affermyn here,
In al this world ne was ther never pere
Un-to this cite, and write it for a sothe,
As in his boke my mayster Guydo doth.
And that it myght in prosperite,
In hyghe honour and felicite,
From al assaut perpetuelly contune,[7]
It reysed was in worschip of Neptune,
And namyd Troye, as it was to-forn,
Lyche the firste that was thorugh Grekis lorn.
The lenthe was, schortly to conclude,
Thre dayes journe, lyche the latitude,
That never I herd make mencioun
Of swiche another of fundacioun,
So huge in compas nor of swiche larges,
Nor to counte so passyng of fayrnes,
So edyfied or lusty to the syght.
And, as I rede, the walles wern on highte
Two hundrid cubites, al of marbil gray,
Maskowed[8] with-oute for sautis[9] and assay;
And it to make more pleasaunt of delyt,
A-mong the marbil was alabaster white
Meynt[10] in the walles, rounde the toun aboute,
To make it schewe with-inne and with-oute

[6] measured. [7] continue. [8] Machicolated. [9] assaults. [10] Mingled.

So fresche, so riche, and so delitable,
That it alone was incomperable
Of alle cites that any mortal man
Sawe ever yit, sithe the world began.
And at the corner of every wal was set
A crowne of golde with riche stonys fret,[1]
That schone ful bright ageyn the sonne schene;
And euery tour bretexed[2] was so clene
Of chose stoon, that wer nat fer a-sondre,
That to beholde it was a verray wonder.
Ther-to this cite compassed enviroun,
Hadde sexe gatis to entre in-to the toun:
The first of al and strengest eke with al,
Largest also and most principal,
Of myghty bildynge allone peereles,
Was by the kyng callyd Dardanydes;
And in story, lyche as it is fownde,
Tymbria was named the secounde;
And the thridde callyd Helyas;
The fourte gate hight also Cethas;
The fyfte Troiana; the syxte Anthonydes,
Strong and myghty bothe in werre and pes,
With square toures set on every syde.
At whos corners, of verray pompe and pride,
The werkmen han, with sterne and fel visages,
Of riche entaille, set up gret ymages,
Wrought out of ston, that never ar like to fayle,
Ful coriously enarmed for batayle.
And thorugh the wal, her fomen for to lette,
At every tour wer grete gunnys sette,
For assaut and sodeyn aventurys;
And on tourettis wer reysed up figurys
Of wylde bestis, as beris and lyouns,
Of tigers, bores, of serpentis and dragouns
And hertis eke, with her brode hornes,
Olyfauntes and large unicornes,
Buglis,[3] bolys, and many grete grifoun,
Forged of brasse, of copur and latoun,
That cruelly by sygnes of her facys
Up-on her foon made fel manacys.
Barbykans and bolewerkys huge,
A-fore the toun made for highe refuge,
Yiffe nede were, erly and eke late;
And portecolys stronge at every gate,
That hem thar nat noon assailyng charge;
And the lowkis thikke, brode, and large,
Of the gatys al of yoten[4] bras.
And with-inne the myghty schittyng[5] was
Of strong yrne barres square and rounde,
And gret barrerys picched[6] in the grounde,
With huge cheynes forged for diffence,
Whiche nolde[7] breke for no violence,
That hard it was through hem for to wynne.
And every hous, that was bilt with-inne,
Every paleys and every mancioun,
Of marbil werne thoroughout al the toun,
Of crafty bildyng and werkyng most roial.
And the heght was of every wal
Sixty cubites from the grounde acountid;
And ther was non that other hath surmountid
In the cite, but of on heght alyche,
In verray sothe, bothe of pore and riche,
That it was harde of heighe estat or lowe
Hous or palys asounder for to knowe,
So egaly of tymbre and of stoon
Her housis wern reysed everychon.
And if I schulde rehersen by and by
The korve[8] knottes by crafte of masounry,
The fresche enbowyng,[9] with vergis[10] right as linys,
And the vowsyng[11] ful of babewynes,[12]
The riche koynyng,[13] the lusty tablementis,[14]
Vynnettis[15] rennynge in the casementis —
Though the termys in Englisch wolde ryme,
To rekne hem alle I have as now no tyme,
Ne no langage pyked for the nonys,[16]
The sotil joynyng to tellen of the stonys,
Nor how thei putten in stede of morter,
In the joynturys copur gilt ful clere,
To make hem joyne by level and by lyne,
Among the marbil freschely for to schyne
Agein the sonne, whan his schene lyght
Smote in the gold, that was bornyd[17] bright,
To make the werke gletere[18] on every syde.
And of this toun the stretis large and wyde
Wer by crafte so prudently provided,
And by workemen sette so and devided,
That holsom eyr amyddis myght enspire
Erly on morwe to hem that it desyre;
And Zephirus, that is so comfortable
For to norysche thinges vegetable,
In tyme of yere, thorugh-oute every strete,
With sugred flavour, so lusty and so swete,
Most pleasantly in the eyr gan smyte,
The cyteyeyns only to delyte;
And with his brethe hem to recomfort,
Whan thei list walke hem silven to disport.

[1] ornamented. [2] battlemented. [3] Buffaloes. [4] cast. [5] fastening. [6] set. [7] would not. [8] carved. [9] arching. [10] columns. [11] vaultings, tabernacles. [12] grotesque figures, images. [13] quoining, corner-work. [14] panels. [15] Carved tendrils. [16] suitable for the occasion. [17] burnished. [18] smoother.

And thorugh the toun, by crafty purviaunce,
By gret avys and discret ordynaunce,
By compas cast, and squared out by squires,[1]
Of pulsched marbil up-on strong pilleris,
Devised wern, longe, large, and wyde,
In the frountel[2] of every stretis syde,
Fresche alures[3] with lusty highe pynacles,
And moustryng[4] outward riche tabernacles,
Vowted[5] above like recliuatories,[6]
That called werne deambulatories,
Men to walke to-gydre tweine and tweyne,
To kepe hem drie whan it dide reyne,
Or hem to save from tempest, wynde, or thonder,
Yit that hem list schrowde hem silve therunder.
And every hous cured[7] was with led;
And many gargoyl and many hidous hed
With spoutis thorugh, and pipes as thei ought,
From the ston-werke to the canel raught,[8]
Voyding filthes low in-to the grounde,
Thorugh gratis percid of yren percid rounde;
The stretis paved bothe in lengthe and brede,
In cheker wyse with stonys white and rede.
And every craft, that any maner man
In any lond devise or rekene can,
Kyng Priamus, of highe discrecioun,
Ordeyned hath to dwellyn in the toun,
And in stretis, severyd her and yonder,
Everyche from other to be sette a-sonder,
That thei myght, for more comodite,
Eche be hym silfe werke at liberte:
Gold-smythes first, and riche jowellers,
And by hem silf crafty browdereris,[9]
Wevers also of wolne and of lyne,
Of cloth of gold, damaske, and satyn,
Of welwet, cendel,[10] and double samyt eke,
And every clothe that men list to seke;
Smythes also, that koude forge wele
Swerdis, pollex,[11] and speris scharp of stele,
Dartis, daggeris, for to mayme and wounde,
And quarel[12] hedis scharp and square-ygrounde.
Ther wer also crafty armoureris,
Bowyers,[13] and faste by fleccheris,[14]
And swyche as koude make schaftes pleyn,
And other eke that dide her besy peyn
For the werre to make also trappuris,[15]
Bete[16] baners and royal cote armuris,
And by devise stondardis, and penowns,
And for the felde fresche and gay gytouns.[17]
And every crafte that may rekned be,
To tell schortly, was in his cite.
And thorugh this toun, so riche and excellent,
In the myddes a large river went,
Causyng to hem ful gret commodite;
The whiche on tweyne hath partid the cite,
Of cours ful swyft, with fresche stremys clere,
And highte Xanctus, as Guydo doth us lere.
And as I rede, that up-on this flood,
On eche-asyde many mylle stood,
Whan nede was her grayn and corn to grinde,
Hem to sustene, in story as I fynde.
This river eke, of fysche ful plentevous,
Devided was by werkmen corious
So craftely, thorough castyng[18] sovereyne,
That in his course the stremys myght atteyn
For to areche,[19] as Guydo doth conjecte,[20]
By archis strong his cours for to reflecte
Thorugh condut pipis, large and wyde with-al,
By certeyn meatis[21] artificial,
That it made a ful purgacioun
Of al ordure and fylthes in the toun,
Waschyng the stretys as thei stod a rowe,
And the goteris in the erthe lowe,
That in the cite was no filthe sene;
For the canel skoured was so clene,
And devoyded[22] in so secre wyse,
That no man myght espien nor devyse
By what engyn the filthes, fer nor ner,
Wern born a-way by cours of the ryver —
So covertly every thing was cured.[23]
Wher-by the toun was outterly assured
From engenderyng of al corrupcioun,
From wikked eyr and from infeccioun,
That causyn ofte by her violence
Mortalite and gret pestilence.
And by example of this flode ther was
Made Tibre at Rome, and wrought by Eneas,
The which also departed Rome on two,
Myn auctor seith, I not wher it be so.

1 squares. 2 front, façade. 3 covered passages. 4 showing. 5 Vaulted. 6 couches (New Eng. Dict.); better, confessionals? 7 covered. 8 reached to the gutter. 9 embroiderers. 10 thin silk. 11 poleaxe 12 quarrel, arrow for the crossbow. 13 Bow-makers. 14 arrow-featherers.

15 trappings. 16 Embroider. 17 small flags. 18 device. 19 reach. 20 conjecture. 21 channels. 22 emptied. 23 covered.

BYCORNE AND CHICHEVACHE[1]

First ther shal stonde an ymage in poet wise, seyeng these iij balades

O PRUDENT folkes takithe heede,
And remembrithe in youre lyves,
How this story dothe procede,
Of the husbandes and theyr wyfes,
Of theyr accorde and theyr stryves,
Withe lyf or dethe whiche to derayne[2]
Is graunted to these bestes twayne.

Than shal be portrayed two bestis, oon fatte, another leene.

For this Bycorne of his nature
Will non other maner foode,
But pacient husks never in his pasture,
And Chichevache etithe wymmen goode:
And bothe these bestes, by the roode!
Be fatte or leene, it may nat faile,
Like lak or plente of theyr vitaile.

Of Chychevache and of Bycorne
Tretithe holy this matere,
Whos story hathe taught us beforn,
Howe these bestes bothe in feere[3]
Have ther pasture, as ye shal here,
Of men and wymmen in sentence,
Thurghe suffraunce or thurghe impacience.

Than shal be protrayed a fatte beste callid Bycorne, of the cuntrey of Bycornoys, and seyn these thre baladis folowyng.

Of Bycornoys I am Bycorne,
Ful fatte and rounde here as I stonde,
And in mariage bounde and sworne
To Chivache, as hir husbonde,
Whiche will nat eete, on see nor londe,
But pacient wyfes debonayre,
Whiche to her husbondes be nat contrayre,

Ful scarce, God wote! is hir vitaile,
Humble wyfes she fynt[4] so fewe,
For alweys at the countre-taile[5]
Theyr tunge clappithe and dothe hewe;[6]
Suche meke wyfes I be-shrewe,
That neyther can at bedde ne boorde
Theyr husbondes nat forbere oon woorde.

But my foode and my cherisshynge,
To telle plainly and nat to varye,
Is of suche folke whiche theyr livynge
Dare to theyr wyfes be nat contrarye,
Ne from theyr lustis dare nat varye,
Nor withe hem holde no champartye,[7]
Al suche my stomack wil defye.[8]

Than shal be portrayed a company of men comyng towardis this beste Bycorne, and sey these foure baladis.

Felawes, takethe heede, and ye may see
How Bycorne castithe hym to devoure
Alle humble men, bothe yow and me,
Ther is no gayne may us socoure:
Woo be therfor, in halle and boure,
To al these husbandes whiche theyr lives
Maken maystresses of theyr wyfes.

Who that so dothe, this is the lawe,
That this Bycorne wil hym oppresse,
And devouren in his mawe,
That of his wife makithe his maystresse;
This wil us bryng in grete distresse,
For we, for oure humylite,
Of Bycorne shal devoured be.

We stonden plainly in suche case,
That they to us maystressis be;
We may wele syng, and seyn, allas!
That we gaf hem the soverante;
For we ben thralle and they be free;
Wherfor Bycorn, this cruel beste,
Wil us devouren at the lest.

But who that can be soverayne,
And his wife teche and chastise,
That she dare nat a worde gayn-seyn,
Nor disobeye in no manner wise;
Of suche a man I can devise,
He stant under protectioune,
From Bycornes jurisdiccioune.

Than shal ther be a woman devoured in the mowthe of Chichevache, cryeng to alle wyfes, and sey these balad:

O noble wyves, bethe wele ware,
Takithe ensample now by me;
Or ellis afferme wele I dare,
Ye shal be ded, ye shal nat flee;
Bethe crabbed, voydithe humylite,

[1] "Two-Horn" and "Lean-Cow" are the English renderings of the mediæval French "Bigorne" (meaning uncertain) and Chicheface (lean-face). Chaucer in the *Clerk's Tale*, l. 1131, warns wives not to be so patient as Griselda "lest Chichevache them swelwe in his entraille." Our piece is said to have been written for "a peynted or desteyned clothe for an halle, a parlour, or a chaumbre"; v. *Anglia* XXII, 364. The text is J. O. Halliwell's in the Percy Society Edition of Lydgate's Minor Poems, London, 1840, p. 129.

[2] adjudge. [3] together. [4] findeth.
[5] in retaliation. [6] make outcry.
[7] rivalry. [8] digest.

Or Chichevache ne wil nat faile
Yow for to swolow in his entraile.

Than shal ther be portrayed a long horned beste, sklendre and leene, with sharp tethe, and on his body nothyng sauf skyn and boon.

Chichevache this is my name,
Hungry, megre, sklendre, and leene,
To shewe my body I have gret shame;
For hunger I feele so grete teene,[1]
On me no fatnesse wil be seene,
By cause that pasture I fynde none,
Therfor I am but skyn and boon.

For my fedying in existence
Is of wymmen that ben meke,
And liche Gresield in pacience,
Or more theyr bounte for to eeke;
But I ful longe may gon and seeke,
Or I can fynde a good repast
A morwe to breke with my fast.

I trowe ther be a deere yeere[2]
Of pacient wymmen now these dayes;
Who grevithe hem withe word or chere,
Lete hym be ware of suche assayes,
For it is more than thritty Mayes,
That I have sought from lond to lond,
But yit oon Gresield never I fond.

I fonde but oon in al my lyve,
And she was ded ago ful yoore.
For more pasture I will nat stryve,
Nor seche for my foode no more,
Ne for vitaile me to restore;
Wymmen bien woxen so prudent,
They wil no more be pacient.

Than shal be portrayed after Chivache, an olde man withe a baston on his bake, manasynge the best for devouring of his wyfe.

My wife, allas! devoured is,
Most pacient and most pesible,
She never sayde to me amysse,
Whom hathe nowe slayn this best horrible,
And for it is an impossible,
To fynde ever suche a wyfe,
I wil live sowle durynge my lyfe.

For now of newe for theyr prow,[3]
The wyfes of ful highe prudence
Have of assent made ther avow,
For to exile forever pacience,
And cryed wolfes hede obedience,[4]

[1] suffering. [2] dearth. [3] advantage.
[4] outlawed obedience.

To make Chichevache faile
Of hem to fynde more vitaile.

Now Chichevache may fast longe,
And dye for al hir crueltee,
Wymmen hav made hemself so stronge
For to outraye[5] humylite.
O cely[6] husbondes, wo been yee!
Suche as can have no pacience
Ageyns yowre wyfes violence.

If that ye suffre, ye be but ded,
This Bycorne awaitethe yow so sore;
Eeke of yowre wyfes ye stand in drede,
Yif ye geyn-seyn hem any more;
And thus ye stonde and have don yore,
Of lyfe and dethe betwixt coveyne,[7]
Lynkede in a double cheyne.

A DIETARY[8]

For helth of body cover for cold thyn hede;
Ete no raw mete, — take goode heede therto;
Drynk holsom wyne; feede the on light brede;
Withe an appetite rise from thy mete also.
In thyn age, with wymmen have thow nat ado;
Upon thi slepe drynke nat of the cuppe;
Glad towards bedde and at morowe both to,
And use never late for to souppe.

And if it so be that lechis done the faile,
Thanne take goode [hede] and use thynges iii, —
Temperat dyete, temperat travaile,
Nat malicious for none adversite;
Meke in trouble, gladde in poverte;
Riche with litel, content with suffisaunce,
Nat grucchyng,[9] but mery like thi degre;
If phesyk lak, make this thy governaunce.

To every tale, sone, yeve thow no credence;
Be nat to hasty, nor sodainly vengeable;
To poore folke do thow no violence;
Curteys of language, in spendyng mesurable;

[5] crush. [6] silly, hapless. [7] conspiracy.
[8] Translated from the Latin, which is given, with another version of the English, by F. J. Furnivall, *Babees Book*, p. 55, Early Eng. Text Soc., London, 1868. Our text is from the Percy Society edition of the Minor Poems, London, 1840, p. 66. [9] grumbling.

On sundry mete nat gredy at the table;
In fedyng gentil, prudent in daliaunce;
Close of tunge, of word nat deceyvable,
To sey the best sette alwey thy plesaunce.

Have in hate mowthes that ben double;
Suffre at thy table no distractioun;
Have despite of folkes that ben trouble,
Of false rowners[1] and adulacioun;
Withyn thy court, suffre no divisioun,
Whiche, in thi houshold, shal cause grete encrese
Of al welfare, prosperite, and foyson;
With thy neyghburghs lyve in rest and peas.

Be clenly clad after thyn estate;
Passe nat thy bowndis, kepe thy promyse blyth;
With thre folkes thow be nat at debate:
First with thy bettir beware for to stryve;
Ayenst thy felawe no quarrele thou contryve;
With thy subject to stryve it were shame:
Wherfor I counsaile thow pursue al thy lyve,
To lyve in peas and gete the a goode name.

Fuyre[2] at morowe, and towards bed at eve,
For mystis blake, and eyre[3] of pestilence;
Betyme at masse, thow shalt the better preve,
First at thi risyng do to God reverence.
Visite the pore, with intyre diligence;
On al nedy have thow compassioun,
And God shal sende grace and influence,
To encrese the and thy possessioun.

Suffre no surfetis in thy house at nyght,
Ware of reresoupers,[4] and of grete excesse,
Of noddyng hedys and of candel light,
And slowth at morowe and slomberyng idelnes,
Whiche of al vices is chief porteresse;
Voyde al drunklew,[5] lyers, and lechours;
Of al unthriftes exile the mastres,
That is to say, dyse, players, and haserdours.

[1] whisperers, tale-tellers. [2] Fire. [3] air. [4] late suppers. [5] drunken persons. Strictly, "drunkenness."

After mete beware, make nat to long slepe;
Hede, foote, and stomak preserve ay from cold;
Be nat to pensyf, of thought[6] take no kepe;
After thy rent mayntene thyn household,
Suffre in tyme, in thi right be bold;
Swere none othis no man to begyle,
In thi yowth be lusty; sad[7] whan thou art olde.

Dyne nat at morwe aforne thyn appetite,
Clere eyre and walkyng makith goode digestioun;
Betwene meles drynk nat for no froward delite
But thurst or travaile yeve the occasioun;
Over salt mete doth grete oppressioun
To fieble stomakes, whan they can nat refreyne,
For nothyng more contrary to theyr complexioun;
Of gredy handes the stomak hath grete peyne.

Thus in two thyngs standith al the welthe
Of sowle and body, who so lust to sewe;[8]
Moderate foode giveth to man his helthe,
And al surfetis doth from hym remewe,
And charite to the sowle is dewe;
This ressayt is bought of no poticarye,
Of mayster Antony, nor of maister Hewe;
To al indifferent, richest diatorye.

ON WOMEN'S HORNS[9]

Of God and kynd procedyth all beaulte;
Crafte may shew a foren apparence,
But nature ay must haf the soveraynte.
Thyng countirfetyd hath non existence;
Twene gold and gossomer is gret difference;
Trewë metall requirith non alay;
Unto purpose by clere experience,
Bewtey will shewe, thow hornys be away.

[6] anxiety. [7] serious. [8] give attention, follow.
[9] These great horned headdresses were favorite targets for satire. For cuts and descriptions of them see Mrs. C. H. Ashdown's *British Costumes*, frontispiece, and pp. 167 f. Our text is from *Political, Religious, and Love Poems*, ed. F. J. Furnivall, E. E. T. Soc., 1893. The piece is also found in the Percy Soc. edition of the *Minor Poems*, and in *Reliquiae Antiquae*, ed. Wright and Halliwell, London, 1841, I, 79.

Riche attyrys of gold and of perry,[1]
Charbunclys, rubeys of most excellence,
Shew in derknes lyght, whereso they be,
By their natural hevenly influence;
Doblettes of glasse yeve a gret evidence,
Thyng countirfet wyl failen at assay;
On thys mater, concludyng in sentence,
Bewte wyll shew, thow hornes be away.

Aleyn[2] remembryght, hys Complaynt who list see,
In hys boke of famose eloquence;
Cladd all in flowris, and blossummys of a tre,
He saw Nature in hyr most excellence,
Upon hyr hede a kerchef of valence,[3]
None othyr riches of countyrfet aray;
T'exemplifye by kyndly providence,
Bewte wyll shew thow hornys be away.

Famose poetys of antiquite
In Grece and Troy, renowmyd of prudence,
Wrote of qwene Helene, and Penolope,
Of Policene[4] with hyr chast innocence;
For wyfys trew call Lucrece to presence;
That they were fayre, ther can no man say nay;
Kynd[5] wroght hem with so grete diligence,
Theyr bewte cowde shew, thow hornys were cast away.

Clerkes record by gret auctorite,
Hornys wer gyffe to bestis for diffence,
A thyng contrary to feminite,
To be mad sturdy of resistence;
But archwyfes, eger in ther violence,
Fierse as a tigre forto make affray,
They haf despite, and agayne conscience,
List not, of pride, theyre hornys cast away.

LENVOYE

Noble princesse, thys litell short ditey,
Rudely compilyd, lat it be none offence
To yowre womanly mercifull pyte,
Thow it be radd in yowr audience.

Payse[6] every thyng in yowre just advertence.
So it be no displesance to yowre pay,[7]
Undir support of yowr pacience,
Yeveth example hornes to cast away.

Grettest of vertues is humilite,
As Salamon sayth, son of Sapience,
Most was accepted to the deite.
Take hede here-of, gefe to thys word credence,
How Maria, who had a preeminence
Above all women, in Bedlem whan she lay,
At Christis byrth, no cloth of gret dispence,
She weryd a keverche; hornys were cast away.

Of byrthe she was hyghest of degre,
To whom all angelles did obedience,
Of Davides lyne, which sprong out of Iesse,
In whom all verteu is, by iust convenience
Made stable in God by gostly confidence.
This rose of Jerico, ther growith non such in May,
Pure in spirite, parfite in pacience,
In whom all hornys of pride were put away.

Moder of Ihesu, myrrour of chastite,
In word nor thowght that never did offence;
Trew examplire of virginite,
Hede-spryng and well of parfite continence!
Was never clerk, by retoryk or science,
Cowde all hyr verteus reherse to this day.
Noble princesse, of meke benivolence,
By example of hyr, yowre hornys cast away.

Explicit.

LYDGATE'S MUMMING AT HERTFORD[8]

Most noble prynce, with support of your grace
Ther been entred into youre royal place,
And late coomen in to youre castell
Youre poure lieges, wheche lyke nothing weel,

[1] jewelry.
[2] Alain de l'Isle (Lille), Alanus de Insulis, wrote his *Complaint of Nature* (De Planctu Naturae) in the latter half of the twelfth century. It was extremely influential. Chaucer in the *Parliament of Fowls*, l. 316, alludes to this same description of Nature.
[3] A thin, fine material. Such a kerchief is Venus's whole array in the *Parliament of Fowls*, l. 272.
[4] Polyxena, the love of Achilles. [5] Nature.
[6] Weigh. [7] pleasure.
[8] This jocose piece, printed by Miss Hammond in *Anglia* XXII, p. 364 f., was written in the first quarter of the 15th century; and it is preceded by this heading: — Nowe folowethe here the maner of a bille by wey of supplicacoun putte to the Kyng, holding his noble feast of Christmasse in the Castel of Hertford, as in a disguysing of the rude upplandisshe people compleyning on hir wyves. With the boystous aunswere of hir wyves. Devysed by Lydgate at the request of the Countre Roullour.

Nowe in the vigyle of this nuwe yeere
Certeyne sweynes ful froward of ther chere
Of entent comen, fallen on ther kne,
For to compleyne unto yuoure magestee
Upon the mescheef of gret adversytee,
Upon the trouble and the cruweltee,
Which that they have endured in theyre lyves
By the felnesse of theyre fierce wyves;
Which is a tourment verray importable,
A bonde of sorowe, a knott unremuwable;
For whoo is bounde or locked in maryage,
Yif he beo olde, he fallethe in dotage;
And yong folkes, of theyre lymmes sklendre,
Grene and lusty and of brawne but tendre—
Phylosophres callen in suche age
A chylde to wyve a woodnesse[1] or a raage;
For they afferme ther is noon eorthely stryff
May bee compared to wedding of a wyff.
And who that ever stondethe in the cas,
He with his rebecke[2] may sing ful offt
'Ellas!'
Lyke as theos hynes here stonding oon by oon,
He may with hem upon the daunce goon,
Leorne the traas, boothe at even and morowe,
Of Karycantowe[3] in tourment and in sorowe,
Weyle the whyle, ellas, that he was borne.
For Obbe the Reeve that goothe here al to forne
He pleynthe sore his mariage is not meete,
For his wyff, Beautryce Bittersweete,
Cast upon him an hougly cheer[4] ful rowghe.
Whane he komethe home ful wery from the ploughe,
Whith hungry stomake, deed and paale of cheere,
In hope to fynde redy his dynier,
Thanne sittethe Beautryce bolling at the nale,[5]
As she that gyvethe of him no maner tale;
For she al day with hir jowsy nolle[6]
Hathe for the collyk pouped[7] in the bolle;
And for heedache, with pepir and gynger
Drank dolled[8] ale to make hir throte cleer;
And kemethe hir hoome whane hit drawethe to eve.
And thanne Robyn, the cely[9] poure Reeve,
Fynde noone amendes of harome[10] ne damage,
But leene growell,[11] and soupethe colde potage;
And of his wyf hathe noone other cheer
But cokkroworthes[12] unto his souper.
This is his servyce sitting at the borde;
And cely Robyn, yif he speke a wórde,
Beautryce of him doothe so lytel rekke
That with hir distaff she hittethe him in the nekke
For a medecyne to chawf[13] with his blood.
With suche a metyerde[14] she hathe shape him an hoode.[15]
And Colyn Cobeller, folowing his felawe,
Hathe hade his part of the same lawe;
For by the feyth that the preost him gaf,
His wyff hathe taught him to pleyne at[16] the staff,
Hir quarter strookis were so large and rounde,
That on his rigge[17] the towche was alwey founde.
Cecely Soure-Chere, his owen precyous spouse,
Kowde him reheete[18] whane he came to house.
Yif he ought spake whanne he felt peyne,
Ageyne on worde alweys he hade tweyne.
Sheo qwytt him ever—ther was nothing to seeche—
Six for on of worde and strookes eche.
Ther was no meen bytweene hem for to goone.
Whatever he wan clowting olde shoone
The wykday—pleynly this is no tale—
Sheo wolde on Sondayes drynk it at the nale.[19]
His part was noon; he sayde not onys nay.
Hit is no game,[20] but an hernest play,
For lack of wit a man his wyf to greeve.
Theos housbondemen—whoso wolde hem leeve[21]—
Koude, yif they dourst, telle in audyence
What followthe ther, of wyves to doone offence.
Is noon so olde ne ryveld[22] on hir face,
Wit tong or staff but that she dare manase.
Mabyle—God hir sauve and blesse—
Koude, yif hir list, bere hereof witnesse.

[1] madness. [2] fiddle. [3] *The traas of K.* is apparently the dance of the henpecked. [4] ugly countenance. [5] quaffing at the tavern. [6] drunken head. [7] tooted, gulped. [8] mulled. [9] silly, harmless.
[10] harm. [11] gruel. [12] heated-up vegetables. [13] heat. [14] measuring-stick. [15] Figuratively, "fooled him." [16] play at—or, possibly, complain of. [17] back. [18] comfort. The word also means assail. [19] alehouse. [20] joke. [21] believe. [22] wrinkled.

Wordes, strookes, unhappe, and harde grace,
With sharp nayles kracching in the face —
I mene thus, whane the distaff is broke
With theyre fistes wyves wol be wrooke.[1]
Blessed thoo men that cane in suche offence
Meekly souffre, take al in pacyence,
Tendure suche wyfly purgatorye,
Heven for theyre meede, to regne ther in glorye.
God graunt al housbandes that beon in this place
To wynne so Hevon, for his hooly grace.
Nexst in order this bochier[2] stoute and bolde,
That killed hathe bulles and boores olde,
This Berthilmewe, for al his broode knyff,
Yit durst he never with his sturdy wyff
In no mater holde chaumpartye.[3]
And if he did, sheo wolde anoon defye
His pompe, his pryde, with a sterne thought,
And sodeynly setten him at nought.
Thoughe his bely were rounded lyche an ooke,
She wolde not fayle to gyf the first strooke;
For proude Pernelle lyche a chaumpyoun
Wolde leve hir puddinges[4] in a gret cawdroun,
Suffre hem boylle and take of hem noon heede,
But with hir skumour[5] reeche him on the heved.
Shee wolde paye him and make no delaye;
Bid him goo pleye him a twenty devel wey.
She was no cowarde founde at suche a neode;
Hir fist ful offt made his cheekis bleed.
What querell ever that he agenst hir sette,
She cast hir not to dyen in his dette.
She made no taylle, but qwytt him by and by;[6]
His quarter sowde[7] she payde him feythfully,
And his waages, with al hir best entent;
She made therof noon assignement.
Eeke Thomme Tynker, with alle hees pannes olde,
And alle the wyres of Banebury that he solde,
His styth,[8] his hamour, his bagge portatyf,
Bare up his arme whane he faught with his wyff —

[1] avenged. [2] butcher. [3] dispute the sovereignty. [4] sausages. [5] skimmer. [6] ran up no account but paid instantly. [7] hire. [8] anvil.

He foonde for haste no better bokeller,
Upon his cheke the distaff came so neer.
Hir name was cleped Tybot Tapister.
To brawle and broyle she nad no maner fer,
To thakke his pilche stoundemel[9] nowe and thanne
Thikker thane Thome koude clowten any panne.
Nexst Colle Tyler, ful hevy of his cheer,
Compleynethe on Phelyce his wyff, the wafurer.[10]
Al his bred with sugre nys not baake,
Yit on his cheekis some tyme he hathe a caake
So hoot and nuwe or he can taken heede
That his heres glowe verray reede
For a medecyne whane the forst is colde,
Making his teethe to ratle, that beon olde.
This is the compleynt that theos dotardes olde
Make on theyre wyves, that beon so stoute and bolde.
Thes holy martirs preved ful pacyent,
Lowly beseching in al hir best entent
Unto youre noble ryal magestee
To graunte hem fraunchyse, and also libertee —
Sith they beothe fetird and bounden in maryage —
A suaf conduyt to sauf him frome damage,
Eeke under support of youre hyeghe renoun
Graunt hem also a proteccyoun.
Conquest of wyves is rone thoroughe this lande,
Cleyming of right to have the hyegher hande;
But if you list of youre regallye
The olde testament for to modefye,
And that thee list asselen theyre[11] request,
That theos poure husbandes might lyf in rest,
And that theyre wyves, in theyre felle might,
Wol medle amonge mercy with theyre right;[12]
For it came never of nature ne raysoun
A lyonesse t'oppresse the lyoun;
Ner a wolfesse for al hir thyrannye,
Over the wolf to haven the maystrye,
Ther beon nowe wolfesses moo thane twoo or three,
The bookys[13] recorde, wheeche that yonder bee.

[9] To thwack his hide by the hour. [10] wafer-maker. [11] seal or grant their (the husbands'). [12] mingle mercy with justice. [13] The MS. has *Rookys*.

Seothe[1] to this mater of mercy and of grace;
And or thees dotardes parte out of this place,
Upon theyre compleynt to shape remedye,
Or they be likly to stande in jupardye,
It is no game with wyves for to playe,
But for foolis that gif no force to deye.

Take the heed of th'aunswer of the wyves.

Touching the substaunce of this hyeghe discorde,
We six wyves beon ful of oon accorde.
Yif worde and chyding may us not avaylle,
We wol darrein[2] it in chaumpcloos[3] by batayle
In part[4] oure right, laate or ellys raathe;[5]
And for oure partye the worthy wyff of Bathe
Cane shewe statutes moo than six or seven,
Howe wyves make hir housbandes wynne Heven,
Maugre the feonde and al his vyolence;
For theyre vertu of parfyte pacyence
Partenethe not to wyves nowe adayes
Sauf on theyre housbandes for to make assayes.
Ther pacyence was buryed long agoo;
Gresyldes story recordethe pleinly soo.
It longethe to us to clappen as a mylle,
No counselyle keepe, but the trouth oute telle.
We beo not borne by hevenly influence
Of oure nature to keepe us in sylence;
For this is no doute — every prudent wyff
Hathe redy aunswere in al suche maner stryff,
Thoughe theos dotardes with theyre dokked berdes,
Which strowtethe out as they were made of herdes,[6]
Have ageyn hus a gret quarell nowe sette.
I trowe the bakenn was never of hem fette[7]
Awaye at Dounmowe in the Pryorye.[8]
They weene of us to have ay the maystrye.

[1] Imperative of "see." [2] decide.
[3] Settle it in the lists. On the rights and liabilities of women in the judicial combat see H. C. Lea's *Superstition and Force* (Phil. 1892), p. 152. [4] On behalf of.
[5] early. [6] stick out as if made of hards, flax fibres.
[7] won by them.
[8] An allusion to the celebrated Dunmore flitch for happy couples, given yearly ever since the early thirteenth century. Chaucer (*Wife of Bath's Prologue*, 218) and Langland (*Piers Plowman* A, X, 188) allude to it. See Skeat's note to the latter passage and the *Illustrated London News* for Aug. 24th, 1912, p. 289.

Ellas! theos fooles! Let hem aunswere here to,
Who cane hem wasshe who can hem wringe alsoo.
Wryng hem — yee wryng — so als God us speed,
Til that some tyme we make hir nases bleed;
And sowe hir cloothes whane they bethe to rent,
And clowthe hir bakkes til some of us be shent.
Loo yit theos fooles — God gyf hem sory chaunce!
Wolde sette hir wyves under gouvernaunce;
Make us to hem for to lowte[9] lowe.
We knowe to well the bent of Jackys bowe.
Al that we clayme, we clayme it but of right.
Yif they say nay, let preve it out by fight.
We wil us grounde not upon womanhede —
Fy on hem, cowardes! when hit komethe to nede —
We clayme maystrye by prescripcyoun,
Be long tytle of successyoun
Frome wyff to wyff, which we wol not leese.
Men may weel gruchche,[10] but they shal not cheese.[11]
Custume is us for nature and usaunce
To let oure housbandes lyf in great noysaunce,
Humbelly byseching nowe at oon worde
Unto oure liege and moost soverein lord
Us to defende of his regallye,[12]
And of his grace susteenen oure partye,
Requering the statuyt of olde antiquytee,
That in youre tyme it may confermed bee.

The complaynte of the lewed housbandes with the cruwell aunswers of theyre wyves herde, the kyng yivethe therupon sentence and Jugement.

This noble Prynce, moost royal of estate,
Having an eyeghe to this mortal debate,
First adverting of ful hyeghe prudence,
Wil unavysed gyve here no sentence,
Witheoute counseylle of haste to procede
By sodeyne doome, for he takethe heede
To eyther partye as juge indifferent,
Seing the paryll of hasty jugement;
Pourposithe him in this contynude stryff
To gif no sentence therof diffynytyff
Til ther be made examynacyoun.

[9] bow. [10] grumble. [11] choose. [12] royalty.

He considerethe and makethe raysoun his guyde,
As egal juge, enclyning to noo syde,
Notwithstanding he hathe compassyoun
Of the poure housbandes trybulacyoun,
So offt arrested with theyre wyves rokkes,[1]
Which of theyre distaves have so many knokkes;
Peysing[2] also in his regallye
The lawe that wymmen allegge for theyre partye,
Custume, Nature, and eeke prescripcyoun,
Statuyt used by confirmacyoun,
Processe and daate of tyme oute of mynde,
Records of cronycles, witnesse of hir kuynde;
Wherfore the kyng wol al this nexst yeere
That wyves fraunchyse stonde hoole and entier;
And that no man withstonde it, ne withdrawe,
Til man may fynde some processe oute by lawe,
That they should by nature in theyre lyves
Have soverayntee on theyre prudent wyves—
A thing unkouthe, which was never founde.
Let men be ware, therfore, or they beo bounde.
The bonde is harde, who soo that lookethe weel.
Some men were lever fetterd beon in steel;
Raunsoun might help his peyne to aswaage;
But who is wedded lyvethe ever in servage;
And I knowe never nowher, for ner neer,
Man that was gladde to bynde him prysonier,
Thoughte that his prysoun, his castell, or his holde,
Wer depeynted with asure or with golde.

Explicit.

THE LEGEND OF DAN JOOS[3]

O WELLE of swetnesse replete in every veyne!
That all mankynde preservyd hast from dethe,
And all oure ioy fro langour dydest restreyne
At thy Nativite, O floure of Nazareth!
Whan the Holygost with hys swete breth
Gan to enspyre the, as for hys chosyn place,
For love of man by influence of hys grace,

And were invyolate, O bryght hevynly sterre!
Mong celestynes, reynyng without memory,
That by thyne empryse in thys mortall werre,
Of oure captyvyte gatest the full vyctory,
Whom I beseche for thyne excellent glory,
Som drope of thy grace adowne to me constyll,[4]
In reverence of the thys dyte to fulfyll.

That ounely my rewdenes thy myracle nat deface
Whyche whylom sendest in a devoute abbey,
Of an hooly monke thorough thy myght & grace,
That of all pyte berest bothe lok and key,
For, benynge lady, the sothe of thee to sey,
Full well thow quytyst that done thee love and serve
An hundryd sythys[5] bettyr then they deserve.

Ensample of whyche here ys in portreture,
Withoutyn fable, ryght as hit was in dede,
O refuge and welthe to every creature!
Thy clerke to further helpe now at thys nede.
For to my purpose I wyll anone procede,
The trowthe to recorde, I wyll no lengor tary,
Ryght as hit was, a poynt I wyll nat vary.

Vincencius in hys speculatyf historiall[6]
Of thys sayde monke maketh full mensioun,
Under the fourme to yow, as I reherse shall,
That by a gardeyne as he romyd up and doune
He heerd a bysshop of fame & gret renoune
Seying v. psalmes in honour of that flowre,
That bare Iesu Cryst oure alther redemptoure.[7]

In whiche Psalmes, standyng eche in here degre,
Whoso lyst take hede in syngler lettres fyve,

[1] distaffs. [2] weighing.
[3] From H. N. MacCracken's edition of the *Minor Poems*, Early English Text Soc., 1911, with a few changes in typography and punctuation. A good example of Lydgate's sacred verse.
[4] distil. [5] times. [6] Vincent of Beauvais' *Speculum Historiale*. [7] Redeemer of us all.

This blessyd name MARIA there may he se
That furst of all oure thraldam can depryve,
To the haven of dethe when we gan arryve,
And fro the wawes [1] of this mortall see,
Made us to escape from all adversite.

Dystynctly in Latyn here may ye rede echone,
Folowyng these baladys as for youre plesaunce,
To whom the bysshop hade sayde hys meditacione,
The monke anone delytyd in his remembraunce,
And thought he wold as for his most affiaunce
Cotydyally [2] with hem oonly oure lady plese,
That fro all grevaunce hys sorowes myght appese.

And there withall he wrote hem in hys mynde,
So stedfastly with devoute and hy corage,
That never a day a worde he foryate behynde,
But seyde hem entyerly in-to hys last age,
Hys olde gyltes bothe to a soft [3] and swage [4]
Aftyr hyr matyns, as was hys appetyte,
To sey hem ever was hys most delyte.

Therto his dylygence with all hys hert & myght,
And forthe contynuyd in his devoutest wyse,
Tyll at last hit befell apon a nyght
The hoole Covent at mydnyght gan aryse,
As ys here usage, to do to God servyse.
So when they were assemblyd there in generall,
The suppryour beholdyng aboute over all,

As ys hys offyce that noone of theym were absent,
But of Dan Ioos he cowde no wyse aspy,
He roose hym up and privyly he went
In-to hys chambre, and there he fond hym ly
Deede as a stoone, and lowde he gan to cry
'Helpe,' quoth he, 'for the love of oure lady bryght,
Dan Ioos oure brother ys sodenly dede tonyght.'

The covent anone gan renne halfe in a drede,
Tyll they had behylde, when passyd was here afray,
Owte of hys mowthe a roose boothe sprang and sprede,
Fresshe in his coloure as any floure in May;
And other tweyne out of his eyen gray;
Of hys eares as many full fresshly flowryng
That never yet in gardyne half so feyre gan spryng.

Thys rody roose they have so long beholde
That sprang for his mowthe, tyll they have espyed
Full fayre graven, in lettres of bornyd [5] golde,
MARIE full curyously as hit ys specyfyed,
In bookes oolde; and anone they have hem hyed
Unto the temple, with lawde & hye solempnyte,
Beryng the corse that all men myght hit se.

Whyche they kepte in ryalte & hy perfeccioune
Sevyn dayes in the tempel there beyng present,
Tyll thre bysshops of fame & gret renoune
Were comyn thedyr, ryght with devout entent,
And many another clerk with hem by oon assent,
To se thys myracle of thys lady bryght
Seying in thys wyse, with all her [6] hert and myght:

'Lawde, honour, pryce, and hygh reverence
Eternally be to thee, O hevynly Iuge,
And to thy modyr that of her gret benyvolence
Preserveth from hevynes, in this derke deluge,
That [7] doone her magnyfy, and ys her hoole refuge;
More then they serve [8] sche quyteth a thowsand folde,
Hyr passyng goodnes of us may nat be tolde.'

Thus when these bysshops & clerkis many oon
Had thankyd God, as ferforth as they can,
And thys lady that hathe thys grace ydoon,

[1] waves. [2] Daily.
[3] Construction not clear. [4] assuage.
[5] burnished. [6] their. [7] Those that. [8] deserve.

So full of ioy and blysse was every man
Of thys myracle, that syth the world began
Yet herde I never in roundell,[1] prose ne ryme,
Of halfe the gladnes þat was withyn hem that tyme.

Sone aftyr thys her iorney gan they holde,
Eche in hys syde,[2] in-to hys propre place.
Ryght as they fonde overall so have they tolde
Of thys holy Monke, O lady full of grace!
Now well ys hym, that can hys hert enbrace,
To love the best and chaunge for no new,
That art so feythfull thow canst nat be untrew.

O ye fressche lovers, that lyvyn ever in doublenesse,
And hurt your-self full oft with your owne knyfe,
Your wofull ioy ys medlyd[3] ay with byttyrnesse,
Now glad, now sory, now lyte, now pensyfe,
Thus with your-self ye fall ever at stryfe,
Betwene two wawes ay possyd[4] to and fro,
That in contraryosnes ye stryvyn evyr mo.

Youre blynde fantasyes now in hertes weyve,[5]
Of chyldysshe vanyte and let hem overslyde,
And loveth this lady, that can nowyse deceyve,
She ys so stedfast of hert in every syde,
That for your nedys so modyrly can provyde
And for your poysy these lettres fyve ye take,
Of thys name MARIA oonly for hys sake.

That for youre travayle so well [will] yow avaunce,
Nat as these wemen on the[6] whyche ye doon delyte,
That fedyn yow all day with feynyd pleasaunce,
Hyd undyr tresoun with many wordys whyte,
But bet then ye deserve she woll yow quyte,
And for ye shall nat labour all in veyne,
Ye shall have heven; there ys nomore to seyne;

Whos passyng goodnes may nat be comprehendyd,
In mannys prudence fully to determyne,
She ys so parfyte she cannat be amendyd,
That ay to mercy and pyty doth enclyne.
Now benygne lady that dedyst oure sorowes fyne
In honour of the that done thy psalmes rede
As was Dan Ioos, so quyte hem for theyre mede.

Amen.

[1] song. [2] in his own direction.
[3] mingled. [4] pushed. [5] give up.
[6] *ye* in MacCracken.

JOHN SKELTON

PHILIP SPARROW[1]

Pla ce bo,[2]
Who is there, who?
Di le xi,[3]
Dame Margery;
Fa, re, my, my,
Wherefore and why, why?
For the soul of Philip Sparrow,
That was late slain at Carow,
Among the Nunes Black,
For that sweet soul's sake,
And for all sparrows' souls,
Set in our beadrolls,
Pater noster qui,
With an *Ave Mari,*
And with the corner of a Creed,
The more shall be your meed.
Whan I remember again
How my Philip was slain,
Never half the pain
Was between you twain,
Piramus and Thisbe,
As than befell to me:
I wept and I wailed,
The tears down hailed;
But nothing it availed;
To call Philip again,
Whom Gib our cat hath slain.
Gib, I say, our cat
Worrowed [4] her on that
Which I loved best:
It can not be expressed
My sorrowful heaviness,
But all without redress;
For within that stound,
Half slumbring, in a swound
I fell down to the ground.

Unneth [5] I kest mine eyes
Toward the cloudy skies:
But whan I did behold
My sparrow dead and cold,
No creature but that wold
Have rewed [6] upon me,
To behold and see
What heaviness did me pang;
Wherewith my hands I wrang,
That my sinews cracked,
As though I had been racked,
So pained and so strained,
That no life wellnigh remained.
I sighed and I sobbed,
For that I was robbed
Of my sparrow's life.
O maiden, widow, and wife,
Of what estate ye be,
Of high or low degree,
Great sorrow than ye might see
And learn to weep at [7] me!
Such pains did me freat,[8]
That mine heart did beat,
My visage pale and dead,
Wan, and blue as lead;
The pangs of hateful death
Wellnigh had stopped my breath.
Heu, heu, me,
That I am woe for thee!
Ad Dominum, cum tribularer, clamavi.[9]
Of God nothing else crave I
But Philip's soule to keep
From the marees [10] deep
Of Acherontes well,
That is a flood of Hell;
And from the great Pluto,
The prince of endless woe;
And from foul Alecto,
With visage black and blo;[11]
And from Medusa, that mare,[12]
That like a fiend doth stare:
And from Megeras edders,[13]
For ruffling of Philip's feathers,
And from her fiery sparklings,
From burning of his wings;

[1] This sparkling piece is an elegy for the death of Mistress Jane Scrope's pet sparrow. Such mock elegies, though shorter, had been in vogue since Catullus' lament for his Lesbia's sparrow (c. 60 B.C.), and very likely for longer; and such travesties of church rites were far from rare in the Middle Ages. The small nunnery of the Benedictines at Carow, near Norwich, was probably a sort of boarding-school where Jane and the other well-to-do young ladies of the neighbourhood were educated.

[2] So begins a verse in the Office for the Dead—*Psalms* cxvi (Vulgate cxiv), 9.

[3] *Psalms*, cxvi, 1. Cf. last note. [4] worried.

[5] With difficulty. [6] had pity. [7] from. [8] fret, gnaw.
[9] I cried unto the Lord when I was in trouble.
[10] marah. [11] blue. [12] spectre. [13] adders.

And from the smokes sour
Of Proserpina's bower;
And from the dens dark,
Where Cerberus doth bark,
Whom Theseus did affray,
Whom Hercules did outray,[1]
As famous poets say;
From that hell hound,
That lieth in chaines bound,
With ghastly heades three,
To Jupiter pray we
That Philip preserved may be!
Amen, say ye with me!
Do mi nus,
Help now, sweet Jesus!
Levavi oculos meos in montes: [2]
Wolde God I had Zenophontes,[3]
Or Socrates the wise,
To shew me their devise,
Moderately to take
This sorrow that I make
For Philip Sparrow's sake!
So fervently I shake,
I feel my body quake;
So urgently I am brought
Into careful thought.[4]
Like Andromach, Hector's wife,
Was weary of her life,
When she had lost her joy,
Noble Hector of Troy;
In like manner also
Encreaseth my deadly woe,
For my sparrow is go.
It was so pretty a fool,
It wold sit on a stool,
And learned after my school
For to keep his cut,[5]
With, Philip, keep your cut!
It had a velvet cap,
And would sit upon my lap,
And seek after small worms,
And sometime white bread crumbs;
And many times and oft
Between my breastes soft
It would lie and rest;
It was proper and prest.[6]
Sometime he would gasp
When he saw a wasp;
A fly or a gnat,
He would fly at that;
And prettily he would pant
When he saw an ant;

[1] vanquish. [2] I lifted mine eyes unto the mountains. [3] Xenophon. [4] melancholy. [5] distance. [6] clean and tidy.

Lord, how he would pry
After the butterfly!
Lord, how he would hop
After the grasshop!
And whan I said, Phip, Phip,
Than he would leap and skip,
And take me by the lip.
Alas, it will me slo,[7]
That Philip is gone me fro!
Sin in i qui ta tes
Alas, I was evil at ease!
De pro fun dis cla ma vi,
When I saw my sparrow die!
Now, after my dome,[8]
Dame Sulpicia,[9] at Rome,
Whose name registered was
For ever in tables of brass,
Because that she did pass
In poesy to endite,
And eloquently to write,
Though she would pretend
My sparrow to commend,
I trow she could not amend
Reporting the virtues all
Of my sparrow royal.
For it would come and go,
And fly so to and fro;
And on me it would leap
When I was asleep,
And his feathers shake,
Wherewith he would make
Me often for to wake,
And for to take him in
Upon my naked skin;
God wot, we thought no sin:
What though he crept so low?
It was not hurt, I trow;
He did nothing perdie
But sit upon my knee,
Philip, though he were nice,
In him it was no vice;
Philip had leave to go
To pick my little toe;
Philip might be bold
And do what he wold;
Philip would seek and take
All the fleas black
That he could there espy
With his wanton eye.
O pe ra,
La, soll, fa, fa,
Confitebor tibi, Domine, in toto corde meo.
Alas, I would ride and go

[7] slay. [8] judgment. [9] An amorous poetess of Domitian's reign.

A thousand mile of ground!
If any such might be found,
It were worth an hundred pound
Of king Crœsus' gold,
Or of Attalus the old,
The rich prince of Pargamee,[1]
Who so list the story to see.
Cadmus, that his sister[2] sought,
And he should be bought
For gold and fee,
He should over the sea,
To wete[3] if he could bring
Any of the offspring,
Or any of the blood.[4]
But whoso understood
Of Medea's art,
I would I had a part
Of her crafty magic!
My sparrow then should be quick
With a charm or twain,
And play with me again.
But all this is in vain
Thus for to complain.
I took my sampler once,
Of purpose, for the nonce,
To sew with stitches of silk
My sparrow white as milk,
That by representation
Of his image and fashion,
To me it might import
Some pleasure and comfort
For my solace and sport:
But when I was sewing his beak,
Methought my sparrow did speak,
And opened his pretty bill,
Saying, 'Maid, ye are in will[5]
Again me for to kill,
Ye prick me in the head!'
With that my needle waxed red,
Methought, of Philip's blood;
Mine hair right upstood,
And was in such affray,[6]
My speech was taken away.
I cast down that there was,
And said, 'Alas, alas,
How cometh this to pass?'
My fingers, dead and cold,
Could not my sampler hold;
My needle and thread
I threw away for dread.

[1] Pergamus. [2] Europa. [3] know.
[4] This appears to mean: If Cadmus, the great searcher, could by any means be had, over the sea he should be sent in order to seek the offspring or blood relations of my lost sparrow; so that I might keep up the prized stock. [5] intending. [6] fright.

The best now that I may,
Is for his soul to pray:
A porta inferi,
Good Lord, have mercy
Upon my sparrow's soul,
Written in my beadroll!
Au di vi vo cem,
Japhet, Cam, and Sem,[7]
Ma gni fi cat,
Shew me the right path
To the hills of Armony,[8]
Wherefore the birds yet cry[9]
Of your father's boat,
That was sometime afloat,
And now they lie and rot.
Let some poets write
Deucalion's flood it hight;
But as verily as ye be
The natural sones three
Of Noe the patriarch,
That made that great ark,
Wherein he had apes and owls,
Beasts, birds, and fowls,
That if ye can find
Any of my sparrow's kind,
God send the soul good rest!
I would have yet a nest
As pretty and as prest[10]
As my sparrow was.
But my sparrow did pass
All the sparrows of the wood
That were since Noe's flood,
Was never none so good;
King Philip of Macedon.
Had no such Philip as I,
No, no, sir, hardely.[11]
That vengeance I ask and cry,
By way of exclamation,
On all the whole nation
Of cats wild and tame;
God send them sorrow and shame!
That cat specially
That slew so cruelly
My little pretty sparrow
That I brought up at Carow.
O cat of carlish[12] kind,
The fiend was in thy mind
When thou my bird untwined![13]
I would thou haddest been blind!
The leopards savage,
The lions in their rage,

[7] Ham and Shem.
[8] Armenia, where the ark grounded.
[9] Text doubtful; possibly we should read "whereon the bordes yet lye." Dyce.
[10] tidy. [11] certainly. [12] churlish. [13] killed.

Might catch thee in their paws,
And gnaw thee in their jaws!
The serpents of Libany [1]
Might sting thee venomously!
The dragons with their tongues
Might poison thy liver and lungs!
The manticors [2] of the mountains
Might feed them on thy brains!
Melanchates,[3] that hound
That plucked Acteon to the ground,
Gave him his mortal wound,
Changed to a deer,
The story doth appear,
Was changed to an hart:
So thou, foul cat that thou art
The self same hound
Might thee confound,
That his own lord bote,[4]
Might bite asunder thy throat!
Of Inde the greedy gripes [5]
Might tear out all thy tripes!
Of Arcady the bears
Might pluck away thine ears!
The wild wolf Lycaon [6]
Bite asunder thy backbone!
Of Etna the brenning hill,
That day and night brenneth still
Set in thy tail a blaze,
That all the world may gaze
And wonder upon thee,
From Ocean the great sea
Unto the Isles of Orcady,
From Tilbury Ferry
To the plain of Salisbury!
So traitorously my bird to kill
That never ought [7] thee evil will!
Was never bird in cage
More gentle of courage
In doing his homage
Unto his sovereign.
Alas, I say again,
Death hath departed us twain!
The false cat hath thee slain:
Farewell, Philip, adieu!
Our Lord thy soul rescue!
Farewell without restore,
Farewell for evermore!
And it were a Jew,
It would make one rue,
To see my sorrow new.

[1] Libya. [2] An extraordinary fabulous beast.
[3] So the foremost hound is named in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, III, 232.
[4] bit. [5] griffins, or vultures.
[6] A king of Arcadia transformed into a wolf. Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, I, 163. [7] owed.

These villanous false cats
Were made for mice and rats,
And not for birdes small.
Alas, my face waxeth pale,
Telling this piteous tale,
How my bird so fair,
That was wont to repair,
And go in at my spare,[8]
And creep in at my gore [9]
Of my gown before,
Flickering with his wings.
Alas, my heart it stings,
Remembring pretty things!
Alas, mine heart it slayth,
My Philip's doleful death,
When I remember it,
How prettily it would sit,
Many times and oft
Upon my finger aloft!
I played with him tittle tattle,
And fed him with my spattle,[10]
With his bill betweene my lips;
It was my pretty Phipps!
Many a pretty kuss [11]
Had I of his sweet muss;[12]
And now the cause is thus,
That he is slain me fro,
To my great pain and woe,
Of fortune this the chance
Standeth on variance:
Oft time after pleasance
Trouble and grievance;
No man can be sure
Alway to have pleasure:
As well perceive ye may
How my disport and play
From me was taken away
By Gib, our cat savage,
That in a furious rage
Caught Philip by the head,
And slew him there stark dead.
Kyrie, eleison,
Christe, eleison,
Kyrie, eleison! [13]
For Philip Sparrow's soul,
Set in our beadroll,
Let us now whisper
A *Pater noster.*
Lauda, anima mea, Dominum! [14]
To weep with me look that ye come,
All manner of birds in your kind;
See none be left behind.

[8] slit in the top of a skirt. [9] opening in the breast.
[10] spittle. [11] kiss. [12] beak, mouth.
[13] Part of the Mass — "Lord (Christ), have mercy!"
[14] Praise the Lord, oh my soul.

To mourning look that ye fall
With dolorous songs funeral,
Some to sing, and some to say,
Some to weep, and some to pray,
Every bird in his lay.
The goldfinch, the wagtail;
The jangling jay to rail,
The flecked pye to chatter
Of this dolorous matter;
And robin redbreast,
He shall be the priest
The requiem mass to sing,
Softly warbeling,
With help of the red sparrow,
And the chatt'ring swallow,
This hearse [1] for to hallow;
The lark with his long toe;
The spink,[2] and the martinet [3] also;
The shoveler [4] with his broad beak;
The doterell,[5] that foolish peak,[6]
And also the mad coot,
With a bald face to toot;
The feldfare, and the snite;[7]
The crow, and the kite;
The raven, called Rolfe,
His plain-song to solfe; [8]
The partridge, the quail;
The plover with us to wail;
The woodhack,[9] that singeth chur
Hoarsely, as he had the mur:[10]
The lusty chanting nightingale;
The popingay,[11] to tell her tale,
That toteth [12] oft in a glass,
Shall read the Gospel at mass;
The mavis with her whistle
Shall read there the pistle.[13]
But with a large and a long [14]
To keep just plain-song,
Our chanters shall be the cuckoo,
The culver,[15] the stockdove,
With pewit the lapwing,
The versicles shall sing.
The bitter with his bump,[16]
The crane with his trump,
The swan of Menander,[17]
The goose and the gander,
The duck and the drake,
Shall watch at this wake;

The peacock so proud,
Because his voice is loud,
And hath a glorious tail,
He shall sing the grail; [18]
The owl, that is so foul,
Must help us to howl;
The heron so gaunce [19]
And the cormoraunce,[20]
With the pheasant,
And the gaggling gant [21]
And the churlish chough;
The route [22] and the kowgh; [23]
The barnacle,[24] the buzzard,
With the wild mallard;
The divendop [25] to sleep;
The water-hen to weep;
The puffin and the teal
Money they shall deal
To poor folk at large,
That shall be their charge;
The seamew and the titmose; [26]
The woodcock with the long nose;
The threstle with her warbling;
The starling with her brabbling; [27]
The rook, with the osprey
That putteth fishes to affray;
And the dainty curlew,
With the turtle most true.
At this *Placebo*
We may not well forego
The countring of the coe: [28]
The stork also,
That maketh his nest
In chimneys to rest;
Within those walls
No broken galls
May there abide
Of cuckoldry side,
Of else philosophy
Maketh a great lie.[29]
The estrige,[30] that will eat
An horseshoe so great,
In the stead of meat,
Such fervent heat
His stomack doth freat; [31]
He can not well fly,
Nor sing tunably,

1 bier. 2 chaffinch. 3 martin. 4 spoonbill duck. 5 A sort of plover easily captured. 6 dolt. 7 snipe. 8 solfa, i. e., sing the scale. 9 woodpecker. 10 a cold. 11 parrot. 12 peeks. 13 epistle. 14 one *large* note contained two *longs*. 15 wood-pigeon. 16 The bittern, who makes a bumping or booming noise. 17 This stands for the river Meander here and elsewhere in Skelton

18 gradual, so called because sung at the altar steps. 19 gaunt. 20 cormorant. 21 cackling gannet. 22 wild goose? Cf. *New Eng. Dict.*, rout, sb. 7. 23 Variant of chough, i.e. another of the crow family? 24 barnacle goose. 25 dabchick or didapper. Literally "diver-and-dipper." 26 The proper form of titmouse. 27 scolding. 28 Apparently the jackdaw, chough — or one of his relatives — yet a third time in this list! 29 Where storks nest there can be no marital infidelity. 30 ostrich. 31 fret, bite. Skelton spells it also *frete*.

Yet at a braid[1]
He hath well assayed
To solfe above ela,[2]
Ga, lorell,[3] fa, fa;
Ne quando
Male cantando,
The best that we can,
To make him our bellman,
And let him ring the bells;
He can do nothing else.[4]
Chaunteclere, our cock,
Must tell what is of the clock
By the astrology
That he hath naturally
Conceived and caught,
And was never taught
By Albumazer[5]
The astronomer,
Nor by Ptolemy[6]
Prince of astronomy,
Nor yet by Haly;[7]
And yet he croweth daily
And nightly the tides
That no man abides,
With Partlot his hen,
Whom now and then
He plucketh by the head
Whan he doth her tread.
The bird of Araby,
That potentially
May never die,
And yet there is none
But one alone;
A phoenix it is
This hearse[8] that must bliss
With aromatic gums
That cost great sums,
The way of thurification[9]
To make a fumigation,
Sweet of reflair,[10]
And redolent of air,
This corse for to cense
With great reverence,
As patriarch or pope
In a black cope;
Whiles he censeth the herse,
He shall sing the verse,
Libera me,
In de, la, soll, re,
Softly bemole,[11]
For my sparrow's soul.
Pliny sheweth all
In his story natural[12]
What he doth find
Of the phoenix kind;
Of whose incineration
There riseth a new creation
Of the same fashion
Without alteration,
Saving that old age
Is turned into courage
Of fresh youth again;
This matter true and plain,
Plain matter indeed,
Whoso list to read.
But for the eagle doth fly
Highest in the sky,
He shall be the sedean,[13]
The quere[14] to demean,[15]
As provost principal,
To teach them their ordinal;
Also the noble falcon[16]
With the ger falcon[17]
The tercel gentle,[18]
They shall mourn soft and still
In their amice[19] of gray;
The sacre[20] with them shall say
Dirige, for Philip's soul;
The goshawk[21] shall have a roll
The queresters to control;
The lanners[22] and the merlions[22]
Shall stand in their mourning gowns;
The hobby[22] and the musket[22]
The censers and the cross shall fet;[23]
The kestrel[22] in all this work
Shall be holy-water clerk.
And now the dark cloudy night
Chaseth away Phebus bright,
Taking his course toward the west,
God send my sparrow's soul good rest!
Requiem aeternam dona eis, Domine!
Fa, fa, fa, my, re, re,
A por ta in fe ri,
Fa, fa, fa, my, my.
Credo videre bona Domini,
I pray God, Philip to heaven may fly!

[1] at a pinch. [2] To sing above the highest note in the scale. [3] rogue.
[4] Alluding to some popular saying like "who cannot sing, let him ring."
[5] An Arabian of the ninth century.
[6] Of the celebrated Ptolemaic system.
[7] Another great Arabian astronomer of c. 1100.
[8] bier. [9] censing, incense-burning. [10] perfume.
[11] Flat.
[12] Pliny's *Natural History*, Bk. X, § 2. [13] subdean.
[14] choir. [15] conduct. [16] peregrine falcon.
[17] The great white or gray Norway falcon.
[18] The male of a peregrine falcon.
[19] One of the priest's vestments.
[20] A somewhat smaller falcon.
[21] large, short-winged hawk.
[22] These are all lesser kinds of hawks and falcons.
[23] fetch.

Domine, exaudi orationem meam!
To heaven he shall, from heaven he came!
Do mi nus vo bis cum!
Of all good prayers God send him some!
Oremus.
Deus, cui, proprium est misereri et parcere,
On Philip's soul have pity!
For he was a pretty cock,
And came of a gentle stock,
And wrapt in a maiden's smock,
And cherished full daintily,
Till cruel fate made him to die.
Alas, for doleful destiny!
But whereto should I
Lenger mourn or cry?
To Jupiter I call,
Of heaven emperial,
That Philip may fly
Above the starry sky,
To tread the pretty wren,
That is our Lady's hen:
Amen, amen, amen!
Yet one thing is behind,
That now cometh to mind;
An epitaph, I would have
For Philip's grave:
But for I am a maid,
Timorous, half afraid,
That never yet assayed
Of Helicones well,
Where the Muses dwell;
Though I can read and spell,
Recount, report, and tell
Of the Tales of Canterbury,
Some sad stories, some merry
As Palamon and Arcet,
Duke Theseus, and Partelet;
And of the Wife of Bath,
That worketh much scath
When her tale is told
Among husewives bold,
How she controlled
Her husbands as she wold,
And them to despise
In the homliest wise,
Bring other wives in thought
Their husbands to set at nought;
And though that read have I
Of Gawain and Sir Guy,
And tell can a great piece
Of the Golden Fleece,
How Jason it wan,
Like a valiant man;
Of Arthur's round table,
With his knights commendable,
And dame Gaynour,[1] his queen,
Was somewhat wanton, I ween;
How Sir Lancelot de Lake
Many a spear brake
For his lady's sake;
Of Tristram, and King Mark,
And all the whole wark[2]
Of Bele Isold his wife,
From whom was much strife;
Some say she was light,
And made her husband knight
Of the common hall,
That cuckolds men call;
And of Sir Lybius,
Named Disconius;[3]
Of Quater Filz Amund,[4]
And how they were summoned
To Rome, to Charlemagne,
Upon a great pain,
And how they rode each one
On Bayard Mountalbon;[5]
Men see him now and then
In the forest of Arden:
What though I can frame
The stories by name
Of Judas Maccabeus,
And of Caesar Julius;
And of the love between
Paris and Vienne;[6]
And of the Duke Hannibal,
That made the Romans all
Fordread and to quake;
How Scipion did wake[7]
The city of Carthage,
Which by his unmerciful rage
He beat down to the ground:
And though I can expound
Of Hector of Troy,
That was all their joy,
Whom Achilles slew,
Wherefore all Troy did rue;
And of the love so hote
That made Troilus to dote
Upon fair Cressid,
And what they wrote and said,
And of their wanton wills
Pandare bare the bills

[1] Guinevere. [2] work.
[3] The English romance of *Libeaus Desconus* (The Fair Unknown) may be found in Ritson's *Metrical Romances*, vol. 2.
[4] *Les Quatre Fils Aimon* is a thirteenth-century *chanson de geste*, of which Caxton printed a prose version.
[5] The celebrated steed Bayard of Montauban, who on this occasion carried all the four brothers at once.
[6] Caxton printed this prose romance. [7] watch.

From one to the other;
His master's love to further,
Sometime a precious thing,
An ouche,[1] or else a ring;
From her to him again
Sometime a pretty chain,
Or a bracelet of her hair,
Prayed Troilus for to wear
That token for her sake;
How heartily he did it take,
And much thereof did make.
And all that was in vain,
For she did but feign;
The story telleth plain,
He could not obtain,
Though his father were a king.
Yet there was a thing
That made the male to wring;[2]
She made him to sing
The song of lovers' lay;[3]
Musing night and day,
Mourning all alone,
Comfort he had none,
For she was quite gone;
Thus in conclusion,
She brought him in abusion;
In earnest and in game
She was much to blame;
Disparaged is her fame,
And blemished is her name,
In manner half with shame;
Troilus also hath lost
On her much love and cost,
And now must kiss the post;[4]
Pandare, that went between,
Hath won nothing, I ween,
But light for summer green;[5]
Yet for a special laud
He is named Troilus' bawd,
Of that name he is sure
Whiles the world shall dure:
Though I remember the fable
Of Penelope most stable
To her husband most true
Yet long time she ne knew
Whether he were on live[6] or dead;
Her wit stood her in stead,

1 jewel, ornament.
2 This popular expression appears to mean "cause trouble."
3 Lovers' law (Dyce), or lovers' tune — the lovers being of course jilted.
4 lose, fail — a popular saying.
5 Obscure. A light-for-summer, green fabric? Chaucer's poorly clad Canon rode "all light for summer," Prologue to *Canon's Yeoman's Tale*, l. 16. Green is the color of inconstancy.
6 alive.

That she was true and just
For any bodily lust
To Ulysses her make,[7]
And never would him forsake:
Of Marcus Marcellus[8]
A process[9] I could tell us;
And of Antiochus;[10]
And of Josephus
De Antiquitatibus;[11]
And of Mardocheus,[12]
And of great Assuerus,
And of Vesca his queen,
Whom he forsook with teen,[13]
And of Hester his other wife,
With whom he led a pleasant life;
Of king Alexander;
And of king Evander;[14]
And of Porsena[15] the great,
That made the Romans to sweat:
Though I have enrolled
A thousand new and old
Of these historious tales,
To fill budgets and males[16]
With books that I have read,
Yet I am nothing sped,
And can but little skill
Of Ovid or Virgil,
Or of Plutarch,
Or Francis Petrarch,
Alceus or Sappho,
Or such other poets mo,[17]
As Linus and Homerus,
Euphorion and Theocritus,
Anacreon and Arion,
Sophocles and Philemon,
Pindarus and Simonides,
Philistion and Phorocides;[18]
These poets of auncienty,[19]
They are too diffuse for me:
For, as I tofore have said,
I am but a young maid,
And cannot in effect
My style as yet direct
With English words elect:
Our natural tongue is rude,
And hard to be enneude[20]

7 mate. 8 Ofttimes consul, conqueror of Syracuse, slain by Hannibal, 208 B.C. 9 story.
10 See *Confessio Amantis*, Bk. VIII, 271 ff., and Shakespeare's *Pericles*.
11 *The Jewish Antiquities*, Josephus's great chronicle.
12 Mordecai, with Ahasuerus, Vashti, and Esther.
13 annoyance.
14 The friend of Æneas in Bk. VIII, l. 51.
15 The Etruscan who conquered Rome.
16 mails, i.e., bags. 17 more. 18 Pherecydes, early Greek philosopher. 19 antiquity.
20 adorned, from *en-* and Fr. *nuer*, to tint.

With polished terms lusty;
Our language is so rusty,
So cankered, and so full
Of frowards,[1] and so dull,
That if I would apply
To write ornately,
I wot not where to find
Terms to serve my mind
  Gower's English is old,
And of no value told;
His matter is worth gold,
And worthy to be enrolled.
  In Chaucer I am sped,
His tales I have read:
His matter is delectable,
Solacious,[2] and commendable;
His English well allowed,[3]
So as it is enprowed,[4]
For as it is employed,
There is no English void,[5]
At those days much commended;
And now men would have amended
His English, whereat they bark,
And mar all they wark:
Chaucer, that famous clerk,
His terms were not dark,
But pleasant, easy, and plain;
No word he wrote in vain.
  Also John Lydgate
Writeth after an higher rate;[6]
It is diffuse[7] to find
The sentence[8] of his mind,
Yet writeth he in his kind,
No man that can amend
Those matters that he hath penned;
Yet some men find a fault,
And say he writeth too haut.[9]
  Wherefore hold me excused
If I have not well perused
Mine English half abused;
Though it be refused,
In worth[10] I shall it take,
And fewer wordes make.
  But, for my sparrow's sake,
Yet as a woman may,
My wit I shall assay
An epitaph to write
In Latin plain and light,
Whereof the elegy
Followeth by and by:[11]

[1] perversities. [2] Entertaining. [3] approved. [4] improved, i.e., made good use of, received and treated properly. [5] For as Chaucer employed it, no English is lacking, there is no flaw in the language. [6] Apparently, in a higher style. [7] uncertain, difficult. [8] meaning. [9] loftily. [10] Contentedly. [11] straightway.

Flos volucrum formose, vale!
Philippe, sub isto
Marmore jam recubas,
Qui mihi carus eras.
Semper erunt nitido
Radiantia sidera caelo;
Impressusque meo
Pectore semper eris.
Per me laurigerum
Britonum Skeltonida vatem
Haec cecinisse licet
Ficta sub imagine texta.
Cujus eras volucris,
Praestanti corpore virgo;
Candida Nais erat,
Formosior ista Joanna est;
Docta Corinna fuit,
Sed magis ista sapit.
  Bien men souient.[12]

THE TUNNING OF ELEANOR RUMMING[13]

Tell you I chill,[14]
If that ye will
A while be still,
Of a comely gill,[15]
That dwelt on a hill:
But she is not grill,[16]
For she is somewhat sage
And well worn in age;
For her visage
It would assuage
A man's courage.
  Her loathly lere[17]
Is nothing clear,
But ugly of cheer,
Droopy and drowsy,
Scurvy and lousy;
Her face all bousy,[18]
Comely crinkled,
Wondrously wrinkled,
Like a roast pig's ear,
Bristled with hair.
. . . . . .

[12] The *Commendations* and the *Addition*, about 500 lines in all, now follow; but they mar the poem.
[13] Tunning is brewing. For entertaining gossip concerning Eleanor see Dyce's notes. Such pictures of tavern-haunting women are common in the Middle Ages: the most powerfully drawn are Watriquet de Couvin's *Trois Dames de Paris* (c. 1320) in Montaiglon and Raynaud's *Fabliaux*, *III*, 145; and Langland's *Piers Plowman*, A text, V, 146 f; the pleasantest is Dunbar's *Ballad of Kind Kittok*. [14] for *Ich will*, — with dialect form of the pronoun. [15] wench. [16] cross. [17] face. [18] as of one that boozes.

Her nose somedeal hooked,
And camously crooked,[1]
Never stopping,
But ever dropping;
Her skin loose and slack,
Grained like a sack;
With a crooked back.
Her eyen goundy[2]
Are full unsoundy,
For they are bleared;
And she gray haired;
Jawed like a jetty;[3]
A man would have pity
To see how she is gummed,
Fingered and thumbed,
Gently jointed,
Greased and anointed
Up to the knuckles;
The bones of her huckles[4]
Like as they were with buckles
Together made fast:
Her youth is far past:
Footed like a plane,[5]
Legged like a crane;
And yet she will jet,[6]
Like a jolly fet,[7]
In her furred flocket,[8]
And gray russet rocket,[9]
With simper the cocket.[10]
Her huke[11] of Lincoln green,
It had been hers, I ween,
More than fourty year;
And so doth it appear,
For the green bare threads
Look like sere weeds,
Withered like hay,
The wool worn away;
And yet I dare say
She thinketh herself gay
Upon the holy day,
Whan she doth her array,
And girdeth in her gytes[12]
Stitched and pranked with pleats;
Her kirtle Bristow red,
With cloths upon her head
That weigh a sow[13] of lead,
Writhen[14] in wonder wise,
After the Saracens' guise,
With a whim wham,
Knit with a trim tram,

[1] pug. Skelton himself may have had such a nose. See *Works*, vol. I, p. xlviii, n. 2. [2] gummy, bleared. [3] That is, projecting. [4] hips. [5] That is, flat-footed. [6] strut. [7] smart young thing. [8] sleeved cloak. [9] mantle. [10] Like a flirt. [11] cape. [12] dresses. [13] Weighing about three hundred pounds. [14] Twisted.

Upon her brain pan,
Like an Egyptian,[15]
Capped about:
Whan she goeth out
Herself for to shew,
She driveth down the dew
With a pair of heels
As broad as two wheels;
She hobbles as a goose
With her blanket hose
Over the fallow;
Her shoon smeared with tallow,
Greased upon dirt
That baudeth[16] her skirt.

Primus passus

And this comely dame,
I understand, her name
Is Eleanor Rumming,
At home in her wonning;[17]
And as men say
She dwelt in Sothray,[18]
In a certain stead
Beside Leatherhead.
She is a tonnish gib;[19]
The devil and she be sib.
But to make up my tale,
She breweth noppy[20] ale,
And maketh therof port sale[21]
To travellers, to tinkers,
To sweaters, to swinkers,[22]
And all good ale drinkers,
That will nothing spare,
But drink till they stare
And bring themself bare,
With, Now away the mare,
And let us slay care,
As wise as an hare!
Come who so will
To Eleanor on the hill,
With, Fill the cup, fill,
And sit there by still,
Early and late!
Thither cometh Kate,
Cicely, and Sare,
With their legs bare,
And also their feet
Hardly[23] full unsweet;
With their heels dagged,[24]
Their kirtles all to-jagged,
Their smocks all to-ragged,

[15] gipsy. [16] dirties. [17] dwelling. [18] Surrey. [19] stout wench. [20] nappy. [21] public sale. [22] workers. [23] Certainly. [24] dirtied.

With titters and tatters,
Bringe dishes and platters,
With all their myght running
To Eleanor Rumming,
To have of her tunning:
She leneth[1] them on the same,
And thus beginneth the game.

. . . . . .

Tertius passus

Instead of coin and money,
Some bring her a cony,
And some a pot with honey,
Some a salt, and some a spoon,
Some their hose, some their shoon;
Some ran a good trot
With a skillet or a pot;
Some fill their pot full
Of good Lemster[2] wool:
An huswife of trust,
When she is athrust,[3]
Such a web can spin,
Her thrift is full thin.
Some go straight thider,
Be it slaty or slider;[4]
They hold the high way,
They care not what men say,
Be that as be may;
Some, loath to be espied,
Start in at the back side,
Over the hedge and pale,
And all for the good ale.
Some run till they sweat,
Bring with them malt or wheat,
And dame Eleanor entreat
To birl[5] them of the best.
Than cometh another guest;
She sweareth by the rood of rest,
Her lips are so dry,
Without drink she must die;
Therefore fill it by and by,[6]
And have here a peck of rye.
Anon cometh another,
As dry as the other,
And with her doth bring
Meal, salt, or other thing,
Her harvest girdle, her wedding ring,
To pay for her scot
As cometh to her lot.
Some[7] bringeth her husband's hood,
Because the ale is good;
Another brought her his cap
To offer to the ale tap,
With flax and with tow;
And some brought sour dough;[8]
With hey and with how,
Sit we down a row,
And drink till we blow,
And pipe tyrly tyrlow!
Some laid to pledge
Their hatchet and their wedge,
Their heckle[9] and their reel,
Their rock,[10] their spinning wheel;
And some went so narrow,
They laid to pledge their wharrow,[11]
Their ribskin[12] and their spindle,
Their needle and their thimble:
Here was scant thrift
Whan they made such shift.
Their thrust[13] was so great,
They asked never for meat,
But drink, still drink,
And let the cat wink,
Let us wash our gums
From the dry crumbs.

. . . . . .

Quintus passus

. . . . . .

But of all this throng
One came them among,
She seemed half a leech,
And began to preach
Of the Tuesday in the week
Whan the mare doth kick;
Of the virtue of an unset leek;
Of her husband's breek;[14]
With the feathers of a quail
She could to Bordeaux sail;
And with good ale barm[15]
She could make a charm
To help withal a stitch.
She seemed to be a witch.
Another brought two goslings,
That were naughty froslings;[16]
She brought them in a wallet,
She was a comely callet:[17]
The goslings were untied;
Eleanor began to chide,
They be wretchcocks[18] thou hast brought,
They are sheer shaking nought![19]

. . . . . .

[1] lendeth. [2] Leominster. [3] athirst.
[4] miry or slippery. [5] pour out. [6] immediately.
[7] Literally, a certain one; Anglo-Saxon *sum*.
[8] for leaven. [9] comb for dressing flax. [10] distaff.
[11] whirl. [12] leather apron. [13] thirst. [14] breech.
[15] yeast. [16] worthless shrivelled or frostbitten things.
[17] slut. [18] stunted creatures. [19] absolutely worthless.

Septimus passus

. . . . . .

But some then sat right sad
That nothing had
There of their awn,[1]
Neither gelt[2] nor pawn;
Such were there many
That had not a penny,
But, whan they should walk,
Were fain with a chalk
To score on the balk,
Or score on the tail:[3]
God give it ill hail!
For my fingers itch;
I have written too mytch
Of this mad mumming.
Of Eleanor Rumming,
Thus endeth the gest
Of this worthy fest.

Quod[4] *Skelton, Laureate.*

COLIN CLOUT[5]

WHAT can it avail
To drive forth a snail,
Or to make a sail
Of an herring's tail?
To rime or to rail,
To write or to indite,
Either for delight
Or else for despite?
Or books to compile
Of divers manner style,
Vice to revile
And sin to exile?
To teach or to preach,
As reason will reach?
Say this, and say that,
His head is so fat,
He wotteth never what
Nor wherof he speaketh;
He crieth and he creaketh,
He pryeth and he peeketh,
He chides and he chatters,
He prates and he patters,
He clitters and he clatters,
He meddles and he smatters,
He gloses and he flatters;
Or if he speak plain,
Than he lacketh brain,
He is but a fool;
Let him go to school,
On a three-footed stool
That he may down sit,
For he lacketh wit;
And if that he hit
The nail on the head,
It standeth in no stead;
The devil, they say, is dead,
The devil is dead.
It may well so be,
Or else they would see
Otherwise, and flee
From worldly vanity,
And foul covetousness,
And other wretchedness,
Fickle falseness,
Variableness,
With unstableness.
And if ye stand in doubt
Who brought this rime about,
My name is Colin Clout.
I purpose to shake out
All my cunning bag,[6]
Like a clerkly hag;
For though my rime be ragged,
Tattered and jagged,
Rudely rain-beaten,
Rusty and moth-eaten,
If ye take well therewith,
It hath in it some pith.
For, as far as I can see,
It is wrong with each degree:
For the temporalty
Accuseth the spiritualty;
The spiritual again
Doth grudge and complain
Upon the temporal men:
Thus each of other blother[7]
The t'one again the t'other:
Alas, they make me shudder!
For in hoder moder[8]
The Church is put in faut;[9]
The prelates ben so haut,[10]
They say, and look so high,
As though they would fly
Above the starry sky.
Laymen say indeed
How they take no heed
Their silly[11] sheep to feed,
But pluck away and pull
The fleeces of their wool,
Unethes[12] they leave a lock

[1] own. [2] cash. [3] tally. [4] Quoth.
[5] In this worthiest of Skelton's satires Colin Clout is the vagabond spokesman of the oppressed folk against the upstart, worldly bishops and prelates; the dissolute, irresponsible, cheating nuns, monks, and friars; and even against the indifferent, slack people and nobles themselves.
[6] bag of learning. [7] gabble. [8] hugger-mugger.
[9] fault. [10] haughty. [11] innocent. [12] scarcely.

Of wool amonges their flock;
And as for their cunning,
A glomming[1] and a mumming,
And make therof a jape;[2]
They gaspe and they gape
All to have promotion,
There is their whole devotion,
With money, if it will hap,
To catch the forked cap:[3]
Forsooth they are too lewd
To say so, all beshrew'd!
What trow ye they say more
Of the bishop's lore?
How in matters they be raw;
They lumber forth the law,
To hearken Jack and Gill,
Whan they put up a bill,
And judge it as they will,
For other men's skill,
Expounding out their clauses,
And leave their own causes:
In their provincial cure,
They make but little sure,
And meddle[4] very light
In the Churches right,
But *ire* and *venire*,[5]
And solfa so alamire,[6]
That the praemunire[7]
Is like to be set afire
In their jurisdictions
Through temporal afflictions:[8]
Men say they have prescriptions
Against spiritual contradictions,
Accompting them as fictions.
And whiles the heads do this,
The remnant is amiss
Of the clergy all,
Both great and small.
I wot never how they wark,
But thus the people bark;
And surely thus they say,
Bishops, if they may,
Small houses would keep,
But slumber forth and sleep,
And assay to creep
Within the noble walls
Of the king's halls,
To fat their bodies full,
Their souls lean and dull,
And have full little care
How evil their sheep fare.
The temporality say plain,
How bishops disdain
Sermons for to make,
Of such labour to take;
And for to say truth,
A great part is for slouth,[9]
But the greatest part
Is for they have but small art
And right slender cunning
Within their heads wonning.[10]
But this reason they take
How they are able to make
With their gold and treasure
Clerks out of measure,
And yet that is a pleasure.
How be it some there be,
Almost two or three,
Of that dignity,
Full worshipful clerks,
As appeareth by their werks,
Like Aaron and Ure,[11]
The wolf from the door
To werrin[12] and to keep
From their ghostly sheep,
And their spiritual lambs
Sequestered from rams
And from the bearded goats
With their hairy coats;
Set nought by gold ne groats,
Their names if I durst tell.
But they are loath to mell,[13]
And loath to hang the bell
About the cat's neck,
For dread to have a check;
They are fain to play deuz deck,[14]
They are made for the beck.[15]
How be it they are good men,
Much hearted like an hen:
Their lessons forgotten they have
That Becket them gave:
Thomas manum mittit ad fortia,
Spernit damna, spernit opprobria,
Nulla Thomam frangit injuria.[16]
But now every spiritual father,
Men say, they had rather

[1] looking glum. [2] joke. mitre.
[4] *meddels* in the text.
[5] *Venire* is a writ causing a jury to be summoned.
[6] the lowest note in a musical scale.
[7] The designation of a writ instituting proceedings against those who preferred papal jurisdiction to the king's.
[8] The gist of these twenty lines appears to be: The bishops neglect their dioceses for private lawsuits, which circumstance is likely to make still more acute the quarrel over jurisdiction between Henry VIII and the Pope.
[9] sloth. [10] dwelling.
[11] "Hur" in *Exodus* xvii, 10, and not Uriah in 2 *Sam.* xi — as Dyce has it.
[12] guard. [13] meddle.
[14] a game of cards or dice.
[15] to be at beck and call.
[16] Thomas undertakes great things, thoughtless of contumely and injury. No hostility restrains him.

Spend much of their share
Than to be cumb'red with care:
Spend! nay, nay, but spare;
For let see who that dare
Shoe the mockish mare;
They make her wince and kick,
But it is not worth a leek:
Boldness is to seek
The Church for to defend.
Take me as I intend,
For loath I am to offend
In this that I have penned:
I tell you as men say;
Amend whan ye may,
For, *usque ad montem Sare*,
Men say ye can not appare;[1]
For some say ye hunt in parks,
And hawk on hobby larks,[2]
And other wanton warks,
Whan the night darks.
What hath lay men to do
The gray goose for to shoe?
Like hounds of hell,
They cry and they yell,
How that ye sell
The grace of the Holy Ghost:
Thus they make their boast
Throughout every coast,
How some of you do eat
In Lenten season flesh meat,
Pheasants, partridge, and cranes;
Men call you therefor profanes;
Ye pick no shrimps nor pranes,[3]
Saltfish, stockfish, nor herring,
It is not for your wearing;
Nor in holy Lenten season
Ye will neither beans ne peasen,[4]
But ye look to be let loose
To a pig or to a goose,
Your gorge not endewed[5]
Without a capon stewed.

. . . . . .

Thus I, Colin Clout,
As I go about,
And wandering as I walk,
I hear the people talk.
Men say, for silver and gold
Mitres are bought and sold;
There shall no clergy appose[6]
A mitre nor a crose,[7]
But a full purse:
A straw for God's curse!
What are they the worse?
For a simoniac
Is but a hermoniac;[8]
And no more ye make
Of simony, men say,
But a child's play.
Over this, the foresaid lay
Report how the Pope may
An holy anker[9] call
Out of the stony wall,
And him a bishop make,
If he on him dare take
To keep so hard a rule,
To ride upon a mule
With gold all betrapped,
In purple and pall belapped;
Some hatted and some capped,
Richly and warm bewrapped,
God wot to their great pains,
In rochets of fine Ranes,[10]
White as morrow's milk;
Their tabards[11] of fine silk,
Their stirrups of mixt gold begared;[12]
There may no cost be spared;
Their moiles[13] gold doth eat,
Their neighbours die for meat.
What care they though Gill sweat,
Or Jack of the Noke?[14]
The poor people they yoke
With summons and citations
And excommunications,
About churches and market:
The bishop on his carpet
At home full soft doth sit.
This is a farly fit,[15]
To hear the people jangle,[16]
How warily they wrangle:
Alas, why do ye not handle
And them all to-mangle?[17]
Full falsely on you they lie,
And shamefully you ascry,[18]
And say as untruly,
As the butterfly
A man might say in mock
Were the weathercock
Of the steeple of Paul's;
And thus they hurt their souls

[1] Dyce notes that the rime was probably *Seir* and *appeire*. For *Seir* see *Joshua* xv, 10; *appare* is impair.
[2] The sense appears to be to sport lasciviously with women. Cf. *Magnificence*, l. 1582. A hobby is a small hawk used to chase larks and such. Perhaps we should read *hobby-larks*.
[3] prawns. [4] peas.
[5] Hawking term, "no digestion for you."
[6] learning challenge. [7] crozier. [8] Armenian, i.e., heretic? [9] anchorite. [10] Rennes linen. [11] sleeveless outer garments. [12] adorned. [13] mules. [14] Common men and women. [15] strange case. [16] chatter. [17] thoroughly mangle. [18] attack.

In slandering you for truth:
Alas, it is great ruth!
Some say ye sit in thrones,
Like princes *aquilonis*,[1]
And shrine your rotten bones
With pearls and precious stones;
But how the commons groans,
And the people moans
For prestes[2] and for loans
Lent and never paid,
But from day to day delayed,
The common wealth decayed,
Men say ye are tongue-tayd,[3]
And thereof speak nothing
But dissimuling and glosing.
Wherfore men be supposing
That ye give shrewd counsel
Against the common well,
By polling[4] and pillage
In cities and village,
By taxing and tollage,
Ye make monks to have the culerage
For covering of an old cottage,
That committed is a college
In the charter of dotage,[5]
Tenure par servyce de sottage,
And not *par servyce de socage*,
After old seignieurs,
And the learning of Littleton tenures;[6]
Ye have so overthwarted,[7]
That good laws are subverted,
And good reason perverted.

. . . . . .

Now will I go
And tell of other mo,
Semper protestando
De non impugnando[8]
The four orders of friars,
Though some of them be liars;
As limiters[9] at large
Will charge and discharge;
As many a frere, God wot,
Preaches for his groat,
Flattering for a new coat
And for to have his fees;
Some to gather cheese;
Loath they are to lese[10]
Either corn or malt;
Sometime meal and salt;
Sometime a bacon flick,[11]
That is three fingers thick
Of lard and of grease,
Their covent to increase.
I put you out of doubt,
This can not be brought about
But they their tongues file,[12]
And make a pleasant style
To Margery and to Maud,
How they have no fraud;
And sometime they provoke
Both Gill and Jack at Noke[13]
Their duties to withdraw,
That they ought by the law
Their curates to content
In open time[14] and in Lent:
God wot, they take great pain
To flatter and to feign;
But it is an old said saw,
That need hath no law.
Some walk about in melottes,[15]
In gray russet and hairy coats;
Some will neither gold ne groats;
Some pluck a partridge in remotes,[16]
And by the bars of her tail
Will know a raven from a rail,
A quail, the rail, and the old raven
Sed libera nos a malo![17] *Amen.*
And by *Dudum*, their Clementine,[18]
Against curates they repine;
And say properly they are *sacerdotes*,
To shrive, assoil, and release
Dame Margery's soul out of Hell:
But when the frere fell in the well,
He could not sing himself thereout
But by the help of Christian Clout.[19]
Another Clementine[20] also,
How frere Fabian, with other mo,[21]
Exivit de Paradiso;[22]
Whan they again thither shal come,
De hoc petimus consilium:[23]

[1] of the North, i.e., like Lucifer.
[2] forced grants. [3] tongue-tied. [4] extortion.
[5] This obscure passage possibly says: to have the pledge (mod. *culrach* or *culreach*?) for the recovery of an old cottage which was given to a religious body by some dotard, the tenure being by folly instead of by the usual socage. — Socage is holding in fee simple by the performance of some economic service, such as paying rent or doing agricultural labor.
[6] Littleton (fl. 1450) wrote a *Treatise on Tenures*.
[7] opposed (intransitive).
[8] Always protesting about not bothering.
[9] Friars who beg within a certain defined district.
[10] lose. [11] flitch. [12] polish. [13] Cf. l. 324.
[14] time that is not fast-time.
[15] hair cloaks. [16] remote spots.
[17] Deliver us from evil.
[18] A decretal of Pope Clement V, beginning "Dudum etc." grants friars the power of absolution and the like. See Dyce's note.
[19] Alluding to a popular song which told how a clever maid ducked a lustful friar in a well.
[20] Another decretal of Clement.
[21] more. The allusion is not obvious.
[22] Issued from Paradise.
[23] Of this we seek counsel.

And through all the world they go
With *Dirige* and *Placebo*.[1]
But now my mind ye understand,
For they must take in hand
To preach, and to withstand
All manner of objections;
For bishops have protections,
They say, to do corrections,
But they have no affections
To take the said directions;
In such manner of cases,
Men say, they bear no faces
To occupy such places,
To sow the seed of graces:
Their hearts are so fainted,[2]
And they be so attainted
With covetise[3] and ambition,
And other superstition,
That they be deaf and dumb,
And play silence and glum,
Can say nothing but mum.
They occupy them so
With singing *Placebo*,[4]
They will no farther go:
They had lever to please,
And take their worldly ease,
Than to take on hand
Worshipfully to withstand.
Such temporal war and bate,[5]
As now is made of late
Against holy Church estate,
Or to maintain good quarrels.
The lay men call them barrels
Full of gluttony
And of hypocrisy,
That counterfeits and paints
As they were very saints:
In matters that them like
They shew them politic,
Pretending gravity
And seigniority,
With all solemnity,
For their indemnity;
For they will have no loss
Of a penny nor of a cross
Of their predial[6] lands,
That cometh to their hands,
And as far as they dare set,
All is fish that cometh to net:
Building royally
Their mansions curiously,
With turrets and with towers,
With halls and with bowers,
Stretching to the stars,
With glass windows and bars;
Hanging about the walls
Cloths of gold and palls,
Arras of rich array,
Fresh as flowers in May;
With dame Diana naked;
How lusty Venus quaked,
And how Cupid shaked
His dart, and bent his bow
For to shoot a crow
At her tirly tirlow;[7]
And how Paris of Troy
Daunced a lege de moy,[8]
Made lusty sport and joy
With dame Helen the queen;
With such stories bidene[9]
Their chambers well beseen;
With triumphs of Cæsar,
And of Pompeius' war,
Of renown and of fame
By them to get a name:
Now all the world stares,
How they ride in goodly chares,[10]
Conveyed by oliphants,[11]
With laureat garlands,
And by unicorns
With their seemly horns;
Upon these beasts riding,
Naked boys striding,
With wanton wenches winking.
Now truly, to my thinking,
That is a speculation
And a meet meditation
For prelates of estate,
Their courage to abate
From worldly wantonness,
Their chambers thus to dress
With such parfetness[12]
And all such holiness;
Howbeit they let down fall
Their churches cathedral.
. . . . . .
Of no good bishop speak I,
Nor good priest I escry,[13]
Good frere, nor good chanon,
Good nun, nor good canon
Good monk, nor good clerk,
Nor yet of no good work:
But my recounting is
Of them that do amiss

[1] With singing masses for the dead, of which parts begin thus. [2] feigned. [3] covetousness. [4] With playing the sycophant. [5] debate, fighting. [6] farm.

[7] Cf. Eleanor Rumming, l. 292. Here a wanton allusion. [8] A sort of dance, evidently. [9] withal. [10] chariots. [11] elephants. [12] perfection. [13] attack.

In speaking and rebelling,
In hindering and disavailing[1]
Holy Church, our mother,
One against another;
To use such despiting
Is all my whole writing;
To hinder no man,
As near as I can,
For no man have I named:
Wherefore should I be blamed?
Ye ought to be ashamed,
Against me to be gramed,[2]
And can tell no cause why,
But that I write truly.
Then if any there be
Of high or low degree
Of the spiritualty,
Or of the temporalty
That doth think or ween
That his conscience be not clean,
And feeleth himself sick,
Or touched on the quick,
Such grace God them send
Themself to amend,
For I will not pretend
Any man to offend.
Wherefore, as thinketh me,
Great idiots they be,
And little grace they have,
This treatise to deprave;[3]
Nor will hear no preaching,
Nor no virtuous teaching,
Nor will have no reciting
Of any virtuous writing;
Will know none intelligence
To reform their negligence,
But live still out of fashion,
To their own damnation.
To do shame they have no shame,
But they would no man should them blame:
They have an evil name,
But yet they will occupy the same.
With them the word of God
Is counted for no rod;[4]
They count it for a railing,
That nothing is availing;
The preachers with evil hailing:
'Shall they daunt us prelates,
That be their primates?
Not so hardy on their pates!
Hark, how the losell[5] prates,
With a wide wesaunt![6]

Avaunt, Sir Guy of Gaunt.[7]
Avaunt, lewd priest, avaunt!
Avaunt, sir doctor Deuyas![8]
Prate of thy matins and thy mass,
And let our matters pass:
How darest thou, dawcock, mell?[9]
How darest thou, losell,
Allegate[10] the gospel
Against us of the counsel?
Avaunt to the Devil of Hell!
Take him, warden of the Fleet,
Set him fast by the feet!
I say, Lieutenant of the Tower,
Make this lurdeyne for to lour;
Lodge him in Little Ease,[11]
Feed him with beans and pease!
The King's Bench[12] or Marshalsy,[12]
Have him thider by and by![13]
The villain preacheth openly,
And declareth our villany;
And of our free simpleness
He says that we are reckless,
And full of wilfulness,
Shameless and merciless,
Incorrigible and insatiate;
And after this rate
Against us doth prate.
'At Paul's Cross or elsewhere,
Openly at Westminster,
And Saint Mary Spital,[14]
They set not by us a whistle:
At the Austin friars[15]
They count us for liars:
And at Saint Thomas of Akers[16]
They carp[17] us like crakers,[18]
How we will rule at all will
Without good reason or skill;
And say how that we be
Full of partiality;
And how at a prong[19]
We turn right into wrong,
Delay causes so long
That right no man can fong;[20]
They say many matters be borne
By the right of a ram's horn,[21]
Is not this a shameful scorn,
To be teared thus and torn

[1] injuring. [2] angered. [3] defame.
[4] rule? [5] rascal. [6] weasand, throat.
[7] Possibly this is a certain Guy whose spirit haunted a town near Ghent. See Dyce's note, iii, p. 133. [8] Possibly for *deuce-ace*, two-one, a poor throw, a worthless fellow. Perhaps *devious*. [9] meddle. [10] Allege.
[11] A name for an uncomfortable cell as well as for the stocks. [12] All London prisons. [13] immediately.
[14] This hospital was in Bishopsgate Ward.
[15] In Broad-Street Ward.
[16] Acre. This was a hospital in Cheapside.
[17] scold. [18] noisy talkers. [19] pinch. [20] obtain.
[21] Borne, i.e., carried out, crookedly.

'How may we this endure?
Wherefore we make you sure,
Ye preachers shall be yaw'd;[1]
And some shall be saw'd,
As noble Isaias,
The holy prophet, was;
And some of you shall die,
Like holy Jeremy;
Some hanged, some slain,
Some beaten to the brain;
And we will rule and reign,
And our matters maintain
Who dare say there again,
Or who dare disdain
At our pleasure and will:
For, be it good or be it ill,
As it is, it shall be still,
For all master doctor of Civil,
Or of Divine, or doctor Drivel,
Let him cough, rough,[2] or snivel;
Run God, run devil,
Run who may run best,
And let take all the rest!
We set not a nutshell
The way to Heaven or to Hell.'
Lo, this is the guise nowadays!
It is to dread, men says,
Lest they be Sadducees,
As they be said sain[3]
Which determined plain
We should not rise again
At dreadful doomsday;
And so it seemeth they play,
Which hate to be corrected
Whan they be infected,
Nor will suffer this book
By hook ne by crook
Printed for to be,
For that no man should see
Nor read in any scrolls
Of their drunken nolls,
Nor of their noddy polls,[4]
Nor of their silly souls,
Nor of some witless pates
Of divers great estates,
As well as other men.
Now to withdraw my pen,
And now a while to rest,
Me seemeth it for the best.
The forecastle of my ship
Shall glide, and smoothly slip
Out of the waves wod[5]
Of the stormy flood;
Shoot anchor, and lie at road,[6]
And sail not far abroad,
Till the coast be clear,
And the lode star appear:
My ship now will I steer
Toward the port salu[7]
Of our Saviour Jesu,
Such grace that he us send,
To rectify and amend
Things that are amiss,
When that his pleasure is.
Amen!

1 hewn to bits. 2 For *rout*, i.e., snore? 3 called commonly. 4 silly pates. 5 mad.

GARLAND OF LAUREL[8]

To Mistress Isabell Pennell (l. 973)

By Saint Mary, my lady,
Your mammy and your daddy
Brought forth a goodly baby!
My maiden Isabell,
Reflaring[9] rosabell,
The flagrant[10] camomel;
The ruddy rosary,[11]
The sovereign rosemary,
The pretty strawberry;
The columbine, the nepte,[12]
The jeloffer[13] well set,
The proper[14] violet;
Enuwid[15] your colour
Is like the daisy flower
After the April shower;
Star of the morrow gray,
The blossom on the spray,
The freshest flower of May;
Maidenly demure,
Of womanhood the lure;
Wherefore I make you sure,
It were an heavenly health,
It were an endless wealth,
A life for God himself,
To hear this nightingale,
Among the birdes small,
Warbling in the vale,
Dug, dug,
Jug, jug,
Good year and good luck,
With chuk, chuk, chuk, chuk!

6 at anchor. 7 safe port.
8 The *Garland of Laurel* (c. 1600 ll.) is an elaborate self-laudation, wherein Skelton, Laureate, communes with goddesses and departed worthies about himself and his works. The numerous little lyrical addresses are the pleasantest part of it.
9 Odorous. 10 fragrant. 11 rose.
12 mint; also spelt *nep*. 13 pink, gillyflower.
14 modest. 15 Tinted.

To Mistress Margaret Hussey (l. 1002)

Merry Margaret,
As midsummer flower,
Gentle as falcon
Or hawk of the tower;[1]
With solace and gladness,
Much mirth and no madness,
All good and no badness,
So joyously,
So maidenly,
So womanly
Her demeaning
In every thing,
Far, far passing
That I can endite,
Or suffice to write
Of merry Margaret,
As midsummer flower,
Gentle as a falcon
Or hawk of the tower;
As patient and as still,
And as full of good will,
As fair Isaphill;[2]
Coliander,[3]
Sweet pomander,[4]
Good cassander;[5]
Steadfast of thought,
Well made, well wrought;
Far may be sought
Erst[6] that ye can find
So courteous, so kind
As merry Margaret,
This midsummer flower,
Gentle as falcon
Or hawk of the tower.

LULLABY

With, Lullay, lullay, like a child,
Thou sleepest too long, thou art beguiled.

My darling dear, my daisy flower,
Let me, quod he, lie in your lap.
Lie still, quod she, my paramour,
Lie still hardly,[7] and take a nap.
His head was heavy, such was his hap,
All drowsy dreaming, drowned in sleep,
That of his love he took no keep,
With, Hey, lullay, &c.

With ba, ba, ba, and bas, bas, bas,
She cherished[8] him both cheek and chin,
That he wist never where he was;
He had forgotten all deadly sin.
He wanted wit her love to win:
He trusted her payment, and lost all his pay:
She left him sleeping, and stale away,
With, Hey, lullay, &c.

The rivers rowth,[9] the waters wan,[10]
She spared not to wet her feet;
She waded over, she found a man
That halsed[11] her heartily and kissed her sweet:
Thus after her cold she caught a heat.
My lief,[12] she said, rowteth[13] in his bed;
Iwis[14] he hath an heavy head,
With, Hey, lullay, &c.

What dreamest thou, drunkard, drowsy pate!
Thy lust and liking is from thee gone;
Thou blinkerd blowbowl,[15] thou wakest too late,
Behold, thou liest, luggard, alone!
Well may thou sigh, well may thou groan,
To deal with her so cowardly:
Iwis, powle-hachet,[16] she blear'd thine eye.[17]

Quod Skelton, laureat.

[1] high-flying, towering, hawk.
[2] Hypsiphyle of Lemnos, who succoured Jason. See Chaucer's *Legend of Good Women*.
[3] Coriander. [4] perfume ball.
[5] the herb cassandra? [6] Before.
[7] boldly. [8] kissed him. [9] rough. [10] Wan is a stock adjective with water. [11] embraced. [12] dear one. [13] snores. [14] Certainly. [15] stupid sot.
[16] Apparently "pole-hatchet," i.e., worthless fellow. Cf. "hatchet-face." [17] deceived you.

STEPHEN HAWES

THE PASTIME OF PLEASURE

(*From Cap. xiv. A commendation of Gower, Chaucer, and especially Lydgate*)

O THOUGHTFUL herte, tombled all aboute
Upon the se of stormy ignoraunce,
For to sayle forthe thou arte in grete doute,
Over the waves of grete encombraunce;
Wythout ony comforte, saufe of esperaunce,
Whiche the exhorteth hardely to sayle
Unto thy purpose wyth diligent travayle.

Afrycus' Auster bloweth frowardly
Towarde the lande and habitacyon
Of thy wel faverde and moost fayre lady,
For whose sake and delectacyon
Thou hast take this occupacyon,
Principally ryht well to attayne
Her swete rewarde for thy besy payne.

O pensyfe herte, in the stormy pery[1]
Mercury northwest thou mayst se appere,
After tempest to glad thyne emespery;[2]
Hoyse[3] up thy sayle, for thou must drawe nere
Towarde the ende of thy purpose so clere,
Remembre the of the trace and daunce[4]
Of poetes olde wyth all the purveyaunce.

As morall Gower, whose sentencyous dewe
Adowne reflayreth[5] with fayre golden bemes,
And after Chaucers all abrode doth shewe,
Our vyces to clense; his depared[6] stremes
Kyndlynge our hertes wyth the fyry lemes[7]
Of moral vertue, as is probable
In all hys bokes so swete and profytable.

The boke of fame, which is sentencyous,
He drewe hym selfe on hys own invencyon;
And than the tragidyes so pytous
Of the xix. ladyes,[8] was his translacyon;
And upon hys ymaginacyon
He made also the tales of Caunterbury;
Some vertuous, and some glad and mery.

[1] gale. [2] hemisphere, sphere, life. [3] The earlier form of our *hoist*. [4] example and practice. [5] distills. [6] For *depured*, i.e., refined? [7] rays. [8] *The Legend of Good Women*.

And of Troylus the pytous dolour
For his lady Cresyde, ful of doublenes,
He did bewayle ful well the langoure,
Of all hys love and grete unhappiness.
And many other bokes doubtles
He dyd compyle, whose godly name
In printed bokes doth remayne in fame.

And, after him, my mayster Lydgate,
The monke of Bury, dyd hym wel apply
Both to contryve and eke to translate;
And of vertue ever in especyally,
For he dyd compyle than full nayally[9]
Of our blessed lady the conversacion,
Saint Edmunde's life martred with treson.[10]

Of the fall of prynces, ryght wofully
He did endyte in all piteous wyse,
Folowynge his auctoure Bocas rufully;[11]
A ryght greate boke he did truly compryse,
A good ensample for us to dispyse
This worlde, so ful of mutabilyte,
In whiche no man can have a certente.

And thre reasons ryght greatly profytable
Under coloure he cloked craftely;
And of the chorle he made the fable
That shutte the byrde in a cage so closely,
The pamflete sheweth it expressely;[12]
He fayned also the Courte of Sapyence,[13]
And translated wyth all his dylygence

The grete boke of the last destruccyon
Of the cyte of Troye, whylome so famous,
How for woman was the confusyon;
And betwene vertue and the lyfe vycyous
Of goddes and goddess, a boke solacyous
He did compyle; and the tyme to passe,
Of love he made the bryght Temple of Glasse.

[9] Is this a corruption of some word like *royally*?

[10] Lydgate composed a *Life of the Virgin* and several other pieces about and to her and St. Edmund. See the complete list of his works in MacCracken's *Minor Poems of Lydgate*.

[11] Lydgate's *Fall of Princes* is from Boccaccio's (Bocas') *De Casibus Virorum Illustrium*; and he tells us that he set about his 36,000-line task ruefully.

[12] *The Churl and the Bird*. [13] *The Court of Sapience* and *The Assembly of Gods* (l. 67) may not be really Lydgate's — see MacCracken, p. xxxv.

Were not these thre gretly to commende,
Whyche them applyed such bokes to contryve,
Whose famous draughtes[1] no man can amende?
The synne of slouth they dyd from them dryve,
After theyr death for to abyde on lyve
In worthy fame by many a nacyon,
Their bokes theyr actes do make relacyon.

O mayster Lydgate, the most dulcet sprynge
Of famous rethoryke, wyth balade ryall,
The chefe orygynal of my lernyng,
What vayleth[2] it on you for to call
Me for to ayde, now in especiall;
Sythen your body is now wrapte in chest,
I pray God to gyve your soule good rest.

O what losse is it of suche a one!
It is to grete truely for me to tell;
Sythen the tyme that his lyfe was gone,
In al this realme his pere did not dwell;
Above al other he did so excell,
None sith his time in arte wolde succede,
After their death to have fame for their mede.

But many a one is ryght well experte
In this connyng, but upon auctoryte,
They fayne no fables pleasaunt and covert,
But spende theyr time in vaynful vanyte,
Makynge balades of fervent amyte.
As gestes and tryfles wythout frutefulness;
Thus al in vayne they spende their besynes.

I, lytell or nought expert in poetry,
Of my mayster Lydgate wyll folowe the trace,
As evermore so his name to magnyfy
Wyth suche lytle bokes, by Goddess grace,
If in this worlde I may have the space;
The lytell connyng that his grace me sente
In tyme amonge in suche wyse shall be spente.

And yet nothinge upon presumpcyon
My mayster Lydgate I wyll not envy,
But all onely is mine entencyon
With suche labour my selfe to occupy;
As whyte by blacke doth shyne more clerely,
So shal theyr matters appeare more pleasaunt
Besyde my draughtes rude and ignoraunt.

[1] delineations. [2] availeth.

(From Cap. xvi, of music)

She commaunded her mynstrelles right anone to play
Mamours[3] the swete and the gentill daunce;
With La Bell Pucell, that was fayre and gaye,
She me recommaunded, with all pleasuance,
To daunce true measures without varyaunce.
O Lorde God! how glad than was I,
So for to daunce with my swete lady.

By her propre hande, soft as any sylke,
With due obeysaunce I dyd her then take;
Her skynne was white as whales bone[4] or mylke.
My thought was ravysshed, I might not aslake[5]
My brennynge hert, she the fyre dyd make;
These daunces truely musyke hath me tought
To lute or daunce, but it avayleth nought:

For the fyre kyndled and waxed more and more,
The dauncynge blewe it; wyth her beaute clere
My hert sekened and began to waxe sore;
A mynute vi. houres, and vi. houres a yere,
I thought it was, so hevy was my chere;
But yet for cover my great love aryght,
The outwarde countenaunce I made glad and light.

And for fere myne eyes should my hert bewray,
I toke my leve and to a temple wente,
And all alone I to my selfe dyd saye:
Alas! what fortune hath me hyther sente,
To devoyde[6] my joye and my hert torment;
No man can tell howe great payne it is,
But yf he wyll fele it, as I do ywys.

(From Cap. xviii. Of the dolorous and lowly disputacion betwene La Bel Pucell and Graunde-amoure.)

Than forth so went Good Counsell and I,
At vi. a clocke, unto a garden fayre;
By Musykes toure walked most goodly,
Where La Bell Pucell used to repayre
In the swete mornyng for to take the ayre
Among the floures of aromatyke fume,
The mysty ayre to exyle and consume.

[3] The name of a tune?
[4] ivory — originally from the tusks of the walrus.
[5] quench. [6] lose.

And at the gate we met the portresse,
That was right gentill, and called Curteysy,
Whych salued[1] us wyth wordes of mekenesse,
And axed us the veraye cause and why
Of our comynge to the gardeine sothely?
Truly, saide we, for nothyng but well,
A lytel to speke with La Bell Pucell.

Truly, quod she, in the garden grene
Of many a swete and sundry floure
She maketh a garlonde that is veray shene;[2]
Wyth true-loves[3] wrought in many a coloure,
Replete with swetenes and dulcet odoure;
And all alone, wythout company,
Amyddes an herber[4] she sitteth plesauntly.

Nowe stande you styl for a lytle space,
I wyll let her of you have knowledgynge.
And ryght anone she went to her grace,
Tellyng her than how we were comynge,
To speke wyth her gretly desyrynge.
Truly, she sayd, I am right well content
Of theyr comyng to know the hole entent.

Then good Curteysy, wythout taryenge,
Came unto us wyth all her diligence,
Prayeng us to take our entryng
And come unto the ladies precence,
To tell our erande to her excellence.
Than in we wente to the garden gloryous,
Lyke to a place of pleasure most solacyous.

Wyth Flora paynted and wrought curyously,
In divers knottes of marvaylous gretenes;
Rampande lyons stode up wondersly,
Made all of herbes with dulcet swetenes,
Wyth many dragons of marvaylos likenes,
Of dyvers floures made ful craftely,
By Flora couloured wyth colours sundry.

Amiddes the garden so moche delectable
There was an herber fayre and quadrante,[5]
To paradyse right well comparable,
Set all about with flours fragraunt;
And in the myddle there was resplendyshaunte
A dulcet spring and a marvaylous fountaine,
Of golde and asure made all certaine.

In wonderfull and curious similitude
There stode a dragon, of fyne golde so pure,
Upon his tayle of myghty fortitude,
Wretched and skaled al wyth asure;
Havyng thre hedes divers in fygure,
Whych in a bathe of the sylver grette
Spouted the water that was so dulcette.

Besyde whiche fountayne, the moost fayre lady
La Bel Pucel was galy syttyng;
Of many floures fayre and ryally
A goodly chaplet she was in makynge.
Her heer was downe so clerely shynynge,
Lyke to the golde late purifyed with fyre,
Her heer was bryght as the drawne wyre.

Lyke to a lady for to be moost trewe,
She ware a fayre and goodly garment,
Of most fyne velvet, al of Indy blewe,
Wyth armynes powdred bordred at the vent.[6]
On her fayre handes, as was convenient,
A payre of gloves ryght sclender and softe.
In approchyng nere I did beholde her oft.

And whan that I came before her presence,
Unto the ground I dyd knele adowne;
Sayeng: O lady! moost fayre of excellence,
O stere so clere of vertuous renowne!
Whose beaute fayre in every realme and towne,
Indued wyth grace and also wyth goodnes,
Dame Fame the her selfe doth evermore expresse.

Amoure

Please it your grace for to gyve audyence
Unto my wofull and pitous complaynte;
How fervent love, wythout resystence,
My careful herte hath made low and faynte,
And you therof are the hole constraynt;
Your beauty truly hath me fettered faste,
Wythout your helpe my life is nere-hand paste.[7]

Pucell

Stande up, quod she; I marvayle of this cace,
What sodayne love hath you so arayde
Wyth so great payne your heart to embrace?

[1] saluted. [2] splendid. [3] the plant so called
[4] arbor or garden. [5] square.

[6] Bordered at the openings with a line of the heraldic ermine tails; or perhaps better — dotted with heraldic ermine tails (sometimes white, but more properly black), and embroidered at the openings.
[7] nearly passed.

And why for me ye should be so dismayde?
As of your lyfe ye nede not to be afrayde.
For ye of me now have no greater awe,
But whan ye lyst ye may your love wythdraw.

Amoure

Than stode I up, and right so did she,
Alas! I sayd than, my heart is so set,
That it is yours, it may none other be;
Your selfe hath caught it in so sure a net,
That if that I may not your favour get,
No doubt it is, the great payne of love
May not aswage tyl death it remove.

Pucell

Truely, quod she, I am obedient
Unto my frendes whych do me so guyde;
They shal me rule as is convenient,
In the snare of love I wyl nothyng slyde,
My chaunce or fortune I wyll yet abide.
I thanke you for your love right humbly,
But I your cause can nothing remedy.

. . . . . .

Amoure

I knowe, madame, that your frendes all
Unto me sure wyll be contraryous;
But what for that? your selfe in speciall
Remembre there is no love so joyous
As is your owne to you most precyous;
Wyll you gyve your youthe and your flourynge aege
To them agaynst your mynde in maryage?

Pucell

Agaynst my mynde, of that I were lothe,
To wed for fere, as them to obey;
Yet had I lever they were somwhat wrothe,
For I my selfe do bere the locke and kaye
Yet of my mynde, and wyll do many a daye.
Myne owne I am, what that I lyste to do
I stand untyed, there is no joye therto.

Amoure

O swete lady! the good perfyte sterre
Of my true herte, take ye now pyte;
Thynke on my payne whiche am tofore you here,
Wyth your swete eyes beholde you and se,
How thought and wo, by great extremyte,
Hath chaunged my hue into pale and wanne:
It was not so whan I to love began.

Pucell

So, me thynke, it doth right well appere
By your coloure that love hath done you wo;
Your hevy countenaunce and your dolefull chere;
Hath love suche myght for to aray you so
In so short a space? I marvayle moche also
That ye wolde love me so sure in certayne,
Before ye knewe that I wolde love agayne?

Amoure

My good dere herte! it is no mervayle why;
Your beaute cleare and lovely lokes swete
My herte dyde perce with love so sodaynly
At the fyrste tyme that I dyde you mete;
In the olde temple whan I dyde you grete,
Your beaute my herte so surely assayde,
That syth that tyme it hath to you obayde.

(*From Cap. xix. How La Bell Pucell Graunted Graund Amoure Love, and of her Dispiteous Departage.*[1])

Your wo and payne, and all your languishynge,
Continually ye shall not spende in vayne,
Sythen I am cause of your great mornynge,
Nothynge exyle you shall I by dysdayne;
Youre hert and myne shall never parte in twayne:
Though at the fyrste I wolde not condescende,
It was for fere ye dyde some yll entende.

Amoure

With thought of yll my minde was never myxte,
To you, madame, but alway clene and pure,
Bothe daye and nyght upon you hole perfyxte.[2]
But I my mynde yet durst nothynge discure,[3]
How for your sake I dyd suche wo endure,
Tyll now this houre with dredfull hert so faynt
To you, swete herte, I have made my complaynt.

Pucell

I demed ofte you loved me before,
By your demenour I dyde it aspye,
And in my mynde I juged evermore

[1] merciless departure. [2] quite fixed. [3] disclose.

That at the laste ye wolde full secretly
Tell me your mynde of love right gentilly;
As ye have done, so my mercy to crave,
In all worshyppe you shal my true love have.

Amoure

O Lorde God! than how joyfull was I!
She loked on me wyth lovely contenaunce;
I kyst her ones or twise right swetely;
Her depured [1] vysage, replete with pleasaunce,
Rejoyced my heart with amerous purveaunce.
O lady clere! that perste [2] me at the rote,
O floure of comforte, all my hele and bote!

O gemme of vertue, and lady excellent!
Above all other in beauteous goodlynesse!
O eyen bright as sterre refulgent,
O profounde cause of all my sekenesse,
Now all my joye and all my gladnes,
Wolde God that we were joyned in one,
In maryage, before this day were gone.

Pucell

A, a! sayd she, ye must take a payne a whyle;
I must depart, by the compulcyon
Of my frendes, I wyl not you begyle,
Though they me led to a ferre [3] nacion,
My heart shall be without variacion
Wyth you present, in perfite sykernes,
As true and stable without doublenes.

To me to come is harde and daungerous,
When I am there; for gyauntes ugly,
Wyth two monstres also, blacke and tedyous,
That by the waye awayte full cruelly
For to distroye you yll and utterly,
Whan you that way do take the passage,
To attayne my love by hye advauntage.

(From Cap. xxvii. King Melezius defines Knighthood.)

Knighthode, he sayd, was first established
The comenwelth in right to defende,
That by the wrong it be not minished;
So every knight did truely condiscende,
For the comynwelth his power to entende
Ageynst all suche rebelles contrarious,
Them to subdue with power victorious.

For knighthode is not in the feates of warre,
As for to fight in quarell right or wronge,
But in a cause which trouth can not defarre; [4]
He ought himselfe for to make sure and stronge
Justice to kepe mixt with mercy amonge;
And no quarell a knight ought to take,
But for a trouth or for the comins [5] sake.

For fyrst, good hope his legge harneys sholde be;
His habergion of perfyte ryghtwysenes;
Gyrde faste wyth the gyrdle of chastite,
His riche placarde [6] should be good besines,
Brandred [7] with almes so full of larges;
The helmet mekenes, and the shelde good fayth;
His swerde Goddes worde, as saynt Poule sayth.

Also true wyddowes he ought to restore
Unto their right for to attayne theyr dower,
And to upholde and mainteyne evermore
The welth of maydens with his myghty power.
And to his soverayne, at every maner hower,
To be redy, true, and eke obeysaunt,
In stable love fixt and not variaunt.

(From Cap. xxix. Howe he departed from Kynge Melyzyus, with his Grayhoundes and Attendaunce, his Varlet, and met with false reporte, that chaunged his name to Godfrey Gobilyve. [8])

And so forth we rode, tyll we sawe aferre
To us came rydyng, on a lytell nagge,
A folysshe dwarfe, nothynge for the warre,
With a hood, a bell, a foxtayle, and a bagge;
In a pyed cote he rode brygge a bragge; [9]
And whan that he unto us drewe nye,
I behelde his body and his visnamy. [10]

[1] pure, clear. [2] pierced. [3] far.
[4] defer. [5] commons'. [6] breastplate.
[7] Probably we should read *braudred* = embroidered, embossed, adorned. See *branderer* in the *New English Dictionary*.
[8] Godfrey Hurry-Up or Quickstep. This vulgar, realistic genre-picture, reminding one of Langland and Skelton and the Moralities, occurs oddly in the gentle beauty of *The Pastime*. Notice the change of metre, on page 254, — from stanzas to couplets.
[9] swaggeringly? [10] physiognomy, face.

His head was greate, beteled was his browes,
Hys eyes holow, and his nose croked;
His bryes [1] brystled truely lyke a sowes;
His chekes here,[2] and God wote he loked
Full lyke an ape; here and there he toted [3]
With a pyed berde and hangyng lyppes grete,
And every tothe as blacke as ony gete.[4]

His necke shorte, his sholders stode awry,
His breste fatte, and bolne [5] in the wast:
His armes great, with fyngers crokedly;
His legges kewed;[6] he rode to me fast,
Full lyke a patron [7] to be shaped in hast.
'Good even,' he sayd, 'and have good day,
If that it lyke you for to ryde merely.'

'Welcome,' I sayde; 'I praye the now tell
Me what thou arte and where thou dost dwell.'
'Sothelyche,' quod he, 'whan Icham [8] in Kent
At home Icham; though I be hether sente,
Icham a gentlyman of much noble kynne,
Though Iche be clad in a knaves skynne.
For there was one called Peter Pratefast,
That in all hys lyfe spake no worde in waste;
He wedde a wyfe that was called Maude.'
'I trowe,' quod I, 'she was a gorgious baude.'
'Thou lyest,' quod he, 'she was gentyl and good,
She gave her husbande many a furde hode,[9]
And at his melys, without any mys,
She wolde him serve in clenly wyse ywys.
God love her soule as she loved clennes,
And kepe her dysshes from al foulnes.
Whan she lacketh cloutes, without any fayle
She wyped her disshes wyth her dogges tayle.
And they had yssue Sym Sadle-gander,
That for a wyfe in all the worlde did wander,
Tyll at the last, in the wynters nyght,
By Temmes he sayled, aryved by ryght,
Amonge the nunnes of the grene cote.[10]
He wente to land out of his prety bote,

[1] eyebrows. [2] hairy. [3] peered. [4] jet.
[5] swollen, i.e., he was pot-bellied.
[6] meaning uncertain, perhaps *askew*, bowed.
[7] pattern. [8] I am. This is Kentish dialect.
[9] furred hood, i.e., hoodwinked him. [10] courtesans.

And wedde there one that was comen anewe:[11]
He thought her stable, and fayfthfull, and trewe.
Her name was Betres, that so clenly was,
That no fylthe by her in any wyse shoulde passe.
. . . . . .
And betwene them bothe they did get a sonne,
Whiche was my father, that in Kente did wonne.[12]
His name was Davy Dronken-nole;
He never dranke but in a fayre blacke boule.
He toke a wyfe that was very fayre,
And gate me on her for to be his ayre.
Her name was Alyson, she loved nought elles
But ever more to rynge her blacke belles.[13]
Now are they deade all, so mote I well thryve,
Excepte my selfe Godfray Gobelive,
Whiche rode aboute, a wyfe me to seke,
But I can finde none that is good and meke;
For all are shrewes in the world aboute,
I coude never mete with none other route;
For some develles wyll their husbandes bete,
And tho that can not, they wyll never let
Their tongues cease, but gyve thre wordes for one,
Fy on them all! I wyll of them have none:
Who loveth any for to make hym sadde,
I wene that he become worse than madde.
They are not stedfast nothying in their mynde,
But alway tornyng lyke a blaste of wynde.
For let a man love them never so wele,
They will hym love agayne never a dele.
For though a man all his lyfe certayne
Unto her sue to have release of payne,
And at the last she on hym do rewe,
If by fortune there come another newe,
The first shall be clene out of her favoure.
Recorde of Creseyd and of Troylus the doloure.
They are so subtyll and so false of kynde,
There can no man wade beyonde their mynde.

[11] common enough. [12] dwell. [13] Meaning doubtful.

(*From Cap. xlii. Graund Amours Epitaph*)

O mortall folke! you may beholde and se
Howe I lye here, sometime a myghty knyght;
The end of joye and all prosperite
Is death at last, through his course and myght;
After the day there cometh the derke night;
For though the day be never so longe,
At last the belles ringeth to evensonge.

And my selfe called La Graunde Amoure,
Seking adventure in the worldly glory,
For to attayne the riches and honour,
Did thinke full lytle that I should here lye,
Tyll deth dyde marke me full ryght pryvely.
Lo what I am! and whereto you must!
Lyke as I am so shall you be all dust.

Than in your mynde inwardly despyse
The bryttle worlde, so full of doublenes,
With the vyle flesshe, and ryght sone aryse
Out of your slepe of mortall hevynes;
Subdue the devill with grace and mekenes,
That after your lyfe frayle and transitory,
You may then live in joye perdurably.

THE EXCUSATION OF THE AUCTOUR

Unto all Poetes I do me excuse,
If that I offende for lacke of science;
This lyttle boke yet do ye not refuse,
Though it be devoyde of famous eloquence;
Adde or detra[1] by your hye sapience;
And pardon me of my hye enterpryse,
Whiche of late this fable dyd fayne and devise.

Go, little boke! I praye God the save
From misse-metrying by wrong impression;
And who that ever list the for to have,
That he perceyve well thyne intencion,
For to be grounded without presumption,
As for to eschue the synne of ydlenes;
To make suche bokes I apply my busines.

Besechyng God for to geve me grace
Bokes to compyle of moral vertue;
Of my maister Lidgate to folowe the trace,
His noble fame for laude and renue,[2]
Whiche in his lyfe the slouthe did eschue;
Makyng great bokes to be in memory,
On whose soule I pray God have mercy.

Finis

[1] take away. [2] The line appears corrupt. One might supply *to* before *laude*.

BALLADS

LADY ISABEL AND THE ELF-KNIGHT

1 Fair lady Isabel sits in her bower sewing,
Aye as the gowans[1] grow gay;
There she heard an elf-knight blawing his horn.
The first morning in May.

2 'If I had yon horn that I hear blawing,
And yon elf-knight to sleep in my bosom.'

3 This maiden had scarcely these words spoken,
Till in at her window the elf-knight has luppen.[2]

4 'It 's a very strange matter, fair maiden,' said he,
'I canna blaw my horn but ye call on me.

5 'But will ye go to yon greenwood side?
If ye canna gang,[3] I will cause you to ride.'

6 He leapt on a horse, and she on another,
And they rode on to the greenwood together.

7 'Light down, light down, lady Isabel,' said he,
'We are come to the place where ye are to die.'

8 'Hae mercy, hae mercy, kind sir, on me,
Till ance my dear father and mother I see.'

9 'Seven king's-daughters here hae I slain,
And ye shall be the eight o them.'

10 'O sit down a while, lay your head on my knee,
That we may hae some rest before that I die.'

11 She stroak'd him sae fast, the nearer he did creep,
Wi a sma charm she lulld him fast asleep.

12 Wi his ain sword-belt sae fast as she ban[4] him,
Wi his ain dag-durk[5] sae sair as she dang[6] him.

13 'If seven king's-daughters here ye hae slain,
Lye ye here, a husband to them a'.'

[1] daisies. [2] leaped. [3] walk.

THE DOUGLAS TRAGEDY[7]

1 'Rise up, rise up, now, Lord Douglas,' she says,
'And put on your armour so bright,
Let it never be said that a daughter of thine
Was married to a lord under night.

2 'Rise up, rise up, my seven bold sons,
And put on your armour so bright,
And take better care of your youngest sister,
For your eldest 's awa the last night.'

3 He 's mounted her on a milk-white steed,
And himself on a dapple grey,
With a bugelet horn hung down by his side,
And lightly they rode away.

4 Lord William lookit oer his left shoulder,
To see what he could see,
And there he spy'd her seven brethren bold,
Come riding over the lee.

5 'Light down, light down, Lady Margret,' he said,
'And hold my steed in your hand,

[4] bound. [5] dagger. [6] stabbed.
[7] Also called *Earl Brand*.

Until that against your seven brethren bold,
And your father I mak a stand.'

6 She held his steed in her milk-white hand,
And never shed one tear,
Until that she saw her seven brethren fa,
And her father hard fighting, who lovd her so dear.

7 'O hold your hand, Lord William!' she said,
'For your strokes they are wondrous sair;
True lovers I can get many a ane,
But a father I can never get mair.'

8 O she 's taen out her handkerchief,
It was o the holland sae fine,
And aye she dighted her father's bloody wounds,
That were redder than the wine.

9 'O chuse, O chuse, Lady Margret,' he said,
'O whether will ye gang or bide?'
'I 'll gang, I 'll gang, Lord William,' she said,
'For ye have left me no other guide.'

10 He 's lifted her on a milk-white steed,
And himself on a dapple grey,
With a bugelet horn hung down by his side,
And slowly they baith rade away.

11 O they rade on, and on they rade,
And a' by the light of the moon,
Until they came to yon wan water,
And there they lighted down.

12 They lighted down to tak a drink
Of the spring than ran sae clear,
And down the stream ran his gude heart's blood,
And sair she gan to fear.

13 'Hold up, hold up, Lord William,' she says,
'For I fear that you are slain;'
'T is naething but the shadow of my scarlet cloak,
That shines in the water sae plain.'

14 O they rade on, and on they rade,
And a' by the light of the moon,
Until they cam to his mother's ha door,
And there they lighted down.

15 'Get up, get up, lady mother,' he says,
'Get up, and let me in!
Get up, get up, lady mother,' he says,
'For this night my fair lady I've win.

16 'O mak my bed, lady mother,' he says,
'O mak it braid and deep,
And lay lady Margret close at my back,
And the sounder I will sleep.'

17 Lord William was dead lang ere midnight,
Lady Margret lang ere day,
And all true lovers that go thegither,
May they have mair luck than they!

18 Lord William was buried in St. Mary's kirk,
Lady Margret in Mary's quire;
Out o the lady's grave grew a bonny red rose,
And out o the knight's a brier.

19 And they twa met, and they twa plat,[1]
And fain they wad be near;
And a' the warld might ken right weel
They were twa lovers dear.

20 But bye and rade the Black Douglas,
And wow but he was rough!
For he pulld up the bonny brier,
And flang 't in St. Mary's Loch.

THE TWA SISTERS

1 THERE was twa sisters in a bowr,
Edinburgh, Edinburgh,
There was twa sisters in a bowr,
Stirling for ay,
There was twa sisters in a bowr,
There came a knight to be their wooer,
Bonny Saint Johnston stands upon Tay.

2 He courted the eldest wi glove an ring,
But he lovd the youngest above a' thing.

[1] pleated, entwined.

3 He courted the eldest wi brotch an knife,
But lovd the youngest as his life.

4 The eldest she was vexed sair,
An much envi'd her sister fair.

5 Into her bowr she could not rest,
Wi grief an spite she almos brast.[1]

6 Upon a morning fair an clear,
She cried upon her sister dear:

7 'O sister, come to yon sea stran,
An see our father's ships come to lan.'

8 She 's taen her by the milk-white han,
An led her down to yon sea stran.

9 The younges[t] stood upon a stane,
The eldest came an threw her in.

10 She tooke her by the middle sma,
An dashd her bonny back to the jaw.[2]

11 'O sister, sister, tak my han,
An Ise [3] mack you heir to a' my lan.

12 'O sister, sister, tak my middle,
An yes [4] get my goud and my gouden girdle.

13 'O sister, sister, save my life,
An I swear Ise never be nae man's wife.'

14 'Foul fa the han that I should tacke,
It twin'd me an my wardles make.[5]

15 'Your cherry cheeks an yallow hair
Gars me gae maiden for evermair.'

16 Sometimes she sank, an sometimes she swam,
Till she came down yon bonny milldam.

17 O out it came the miller's son,
An saw the fair maid swimmin in.

18 'O father, father, draw your dam,
Here 's either a mermaid or a swan.'

19 The miller quickly drew the dam,
An there he found a drownd woman.

20 You coudna see her yallow hair
For gold and pearle that were so rare.

21 You coudna see her middle sma
For gouden girdle that was sae braw.

22 You coudna see her fingers white,
For gouden rings that was sae gryte.[6]

23 An by there came a harper fine,
That harped to the king at dine.

24 When he did look that lady upon,
He sighd and made a heavy moan.

25 He 's taen three locks o her yallow hair,
An wi them strung his harp sae fair.

26 The first tune he did play and sing,
Was, 'Farewell to my father the king.'

27 The nextin tune that he playd syne,[7]
Was, 'Farewell to my mother the queen.'

28 The lasten tune that he playd then,
Was, 'Wae to my sister, fair Ellen.'

[1] burst. [2] waves. [3] I shall.
[4] ye shall. [5] world's mate.

THE CRUEL BROTHER

1 There was three ladies playd at the ba,
With a hey ho and a lillie gay,
There came a knight and played oer them a'.
As the primrose spreads so sweetly.

2 The eldest was baith tall and fair,
But the youngest was beyond compare.

3 The midmost had a graceful mien,
But the youngest lookd like beautie's queen.

4 The knight bowd low to a' the three,
But to the youngest he bent his knee.

5 The ladie turned her head aside,
The knight he woo'd her to be his bride.

6 The ladie blushd a rosy red,
And sayd, 'Sir knight, I 'm too young to wed.'

[6] great. [7] after.

7 'O ladie fair, give me your hand,
And I 'll make you ladie of a' my land.'

8 'Sir knight, ere ye my favor win,
You maun get consent frae a' my kin.'

9 He 's got consent frae her parents dear,
And likewise frae her sisters fair.

10 He 's got consent frae her kin each one,
But forgot to spiek to her brother John.

11 Now, when the wedding day was come,
The knight would take his bonny bride home.

12 And many a lord and many a knight
Came to behold that ladie bright.

13 And there was nae man that did her see
But wishd himself bridegroom to be.

14 Her father dear led her down the stair,
And her sisters twain they kissd her there.

15 Her mother dear led her thro the closs,[1]
And her brother John set her on her horse.

16 She leand her oer the saddle-bow,
To give him a kiss ere she did go.

17 He has taen a knife, baith lang and sharp,
And stabbd that bonny bride to the heart.

18 She hadno ridden half thro the town,
Until her heart's blude staind her gown.

19 'Ride softly on,' says the best young man,
'For I think our bonny bride looks pale and wan.'

20 'O lead me gently up yon hill,
And I 'll there sit down, and make my will.'

21 'O what will you leave to your father dear?'
'The silver-shode steed that brought me here.'

22 'What will you leave to your mother dear?'
'My velvet pall and my silken gear.'

23 'What will you leave to your sister Anne?'
'My silken scarf and my gowden fan.'

24 'What will you leave to your sister Grace?'
'My bloody cloaths to wash and dress.'

25 'What will you leave to your brother John?'
'The gallows-tree to hang him on.'

26 'What will you leave to your brother John's wife?'
'The wilderness to end her life.'

27 This ladie fair in her grave was laid,
And many a mass was oer her said.

28 But it would have made your heart right sair,
To see the bridegroom rive his haire.

[1] close, court-yard.

EDWARD

1 'Why dois your brand sae drap wi bluid,
Edward, Edward?
Why dois your brand sae drap wi bluid,
And why sae sad gang yee O?'
'O I hae killed my hauke sae guid,
Mither, mither,
O I hae killed my hauke sae guid,
And I had nae mair bot hee O.'

2 'Your haukis bluid was nevir sae reid,
Edward, Edward,
Your haukis bluid was nevir sae reid,
My deir son I tell thee O.'
'O I hae killed my reid-roan steid,
Mither, mither,
O I hae killed my reid-roan steid,
That erst was sae fair and frie O.'

3 'Your steid was auld, and ye hae gat mair,
Edward, Edward,
Your steid was auld, and ye hae gat mair,
Sum other dule[2] ye drie[3] O.'

[2] grief. [3] suffer.

'O I hae killed my fadir deir,
Mither, mither,
O I hae killed my fadir deir,
Alas, and wae is mee O!'

4 'And whatten penance wul ye drie for that,
Edward, Edward?
And whatten penance will ye drie for that?
My deir son, now tell me O.'
'Ile set my feit in yonder boat,
Mither, mither,
Ile set my feit in yonder boat,
And Ile fare ovir the sea O.'

5 'And what wul ye doe wi your towirs and your ha,
Edward, Edward?
And what wul you doe wi your towirs and your ha,
That were sae fair to see O?'
'Ile let thame stand tul they doun fa,
Mither, mither,
Ile let thame stand till they down fa,
For here nevir mair maun I bee O.'

6 'And what wul ye leive to your bairns and your wife,
Edward, Edward?
And what wul ye leive to your bairns and your wife,
Whan ye gang ovir the sea O?'
'The warldis room, late them beg thrae life,
Mither, mither,
The warldis room, late them beg thrae life,
For thame nevir mair wul I see O.'

7 'And what wul ye leive to your ain mither deir,
Edward, Edward?
And what wul ye leive to your ain mither deir?
My deir son, now tell me O.'
'The curse of hell frae me sall ye beir,
Mither, mither,
The curse of hell frae me sall ye beir,
Sic counseils ye gave to me O.'

BABYLON; OR, THE BONNIE BANKS O FORDIE

1 There were three ladies lived in a bower,
Eh vow bonnie,
And they went out to pull a flower,
On the bonnie banks o Fordie.

2 They hadna pu'ed a flower but ane,
When up started to them a banisht man.

3 He 's taen the first sister by her hand,
And he 's turned her round and made her stand.

4 'It 's whether will ye be a rank robber's wife,
Or will ye die by my wee pen-knife?'

5 'It 's I 'll not be a rank robber's wife,
But I 'll rather die by your wee pen-knife.'

6 He 's killed this may, and he 's laid her by,
For to bear the red rose company.

7 He 's taken the second ane by the hand,
And he 's turned her round and made her stand.

8 'It 's whether will ye be a rank robber's wife,
Or will ye die by my wee pen-knife?'

9 'I 'll not be a rank robber's wife,
But I 'll rather die by your wee pen-knife.'

10 He 's killed this may, and he 's laid her by,
For to bear the red rose company.

11 He 's taken the youngest ane by the hand,
And he 's turned her round and made her stand.

12 Says, 'Will ye be a rank robber's wife,
Or will ye die by my wee pen-knife?'

13 'I 'll not be a rank robber's wife,
Nor will I die by your wee pen-knife.

14 'For I hae a brother in this wood,
And gin ye kill me, it 's he 'll kill thee.'

15 'What 's thy brother's name? come tell to me.'
'My brother's name is Baby Lon.'

16 'O sister, sister, what have I done!
O have I done this ill to thee!

17 'O since I 've done this evil deed,
Good sall never be seen o me.'

18 He 's taken out his wee pen-knife,
And he 's twyned[1] himsel o his ain sweet life.

HIND HORN[2]

1 In Scotland there was a babie born,
And his name it was called young Hind Horn.
Lilie lal, etc. With a fal lal, etc.

2 He sent a letter to our king
That he was in love with his daughter Jean.

3 He 's gien to her a silver wand,
With seven living lavrocks[3] sitting thereon.

4 She 's gien to him a diamond ring,
With seven bright diamonds set therein.

5 'When this ring grows pale and wan,
You may know by it my love is gane.'

6 One day as he looked his ring upon,
He saw the diamonds pale and wan.

7 He left the sea and came to land,
And the first that he met was an old beggar man.

8 'What news, what news,' said young Hind Horn;
'No news, no news,' said the old beggar man.

9 'No news,' said the beggar, 'no news at a',
But there 's a wedding in the king's ha.

10 'But there is a wedding in the king's ha,
That has halden these forty days and twa.'

11 'Will ye lend me your begging coat?
And I 'll lend you my scarlet cloak.

12 'Will you lend me your beggar's rung[4]?
And I 'll gie you my steed to ride upon.

13 'Will you lend me your wig o hair,
To cover mine, because it is fair?'

14 The auld beggar man was bound for the mill,
But young Hind Horn for the king's hall.

15 The auld beggar man was bound for to ride,
But young Hind Horn was bound for the bride.

16 When he came to the king's gate,
He sought a drink for Hind Horn's sake.

17 The bride came down with a glass of wine,
When he drank out the glass, and dropt in the ring.

18 'O got ye this by sea or land?
Or got ye it off a dead man's hand?'

19 'I got not it by sea, I got it by land,
And I got it, madam, out of your own hand.'

20 'O I 'll cast off my gowns of brown,
And beg wi you frae town to town.

21 'O I 'll cast off my gowns of red,
And I 'll beg wi you to win my bread.'

22 'Ye needna cast off your gowns of brown,
For I 'll make you lady o many a town.

[1] deprived.
[2] An ancient and widespread story having some connection with the Middle-English romance, *The Gest of King Horn*. See Professor Child's remarks, *English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, Part I, 201. [3] larks. [4] staff.

23 'Ye needna cast off your gowns of red,
It's only a sham the begging o my bread.'

24 The bridegroom he had wedded the bride,
But young Hind Horn he took her to bed.

KING ORFEO[1]

1 Der lived a king inta da aste,[2]
Scowan ürla grün.[3]
Der lived a lady in da wast.[4]
Whar giorten han grün oarlac.[3]

2 Dis king he has a huntin gaen
He 's left his Lady Isabel alane.

3 'Oh I wis ye 'd never gaen away,
For at your hame is döl[5] an wae.

4 'For da king o Ferrie we his daert,
Has pierced your lady to da hert.'
. . . . . .

5 And aifter dem da king has gaen,
But whan he cam it was a grey stane.

6 Dan he took oot his pipes ta play,
Bit sair his hert wi döl an wae.

7 And first he played da notes o noy,
An dan he played da notes o joy.

8 An dan he played da göd gabber reel,[6]
Dat meicht ha made a sick hert hale.
. . . . . .

9 'Noo come ye in inta wir[7] ha,
An come ye in among wis[8] a'.'

10 Now he 's gane in inta der ha,
An he 's gane in among dem a'.

11 Dan he took out his pipes to play,
Bit sair his hert wi döl an wae.

12 An first he played da notes o noy,
An dan he played da notes o joy.

13 An dan he played da göd gabber reel,
Dat meicht ha made a sick hert hale.

14 'Noo tell to us what ye will hae:
What sall we gie you for your play?'

15 'What I will hae I will you tell,
An dat 's me Lady Isabel.'

16 'Yees tak your lady, an yees gaeng hame,
An yees be king ower a' your ain.'

17 He 's taen his lady, an he 's gaen hame,
An noo he 's king ower a' his ain.

ST. STEPHEN AND HEROD[9]

1 Seynt Stevene was a clerk *in* kyng
Herowdes halle,
And servyd *him* of bred *and* cloþ,[10] as
every kyng befalle.

2 Stevyn out of kechone[11] cam, *wyth* boris
hed *on* honde;
He saw a sterre was fayr *and* bryȝt over
Bedlem stonde.

3 He kyst adoun þe boris hed *and* went in
to þe halle:
'I forsak þe, kyng Herowdes, *and* þi
werkes alle.

4 'I forsak þe, kyng Herowdes, *and* þi
werkes alle;
þer is a chyld in Bedlem born is beter
þan we alle.'

5 'Quat eylyt[12] þe, Stevene? quat is þe
befalle?
Lakkyt þe[13] eyþer mete or drynk in kyng
Herowdes halle?'

6 'Lakit me neyþer mete ne drynk in kyng
Herowdes halle;
þer is a chyld in Bedlem born is beter
þan we alle.'

7 Quat eylyt þe, Stevyn? art þu wod,[14] or
þu gynnyst to brede?[15]
Lakkyt þe eyþer gold or fe, or ony ryche
wede?'

[1] This ballad from the Shetland Islands tells the strangely modified story of Orpheus and Eurydice; yet it is not so very unlike the mediæval version, *King Orpheo*, a beautiful romance, printed in Ritson's *Metrical Romances*, II, 248; and turned into modern verses by E. E. Hunt, Cambridge, Mass., 1909.
[2] east. [3] The Scandinavian refrain is practically meaningless. [4] west. [5] grief. [6] The good gabber reel is some lively tune. [7] our. [8] us.

[9] This version is as old as the fifteenth century. With it may be compared the eighteenth-century carol, *The Carnel* (Crow) *and the Crane*, No. 55 in the Sargent-Kittredge volume. [10] cloth. th is written þ throughout the ballad. [11] kitchen. [12] What aileth. [13] Do you lack. [14] mad. [15] wander, rave (probably).

8 'Lakyt me neyþer gold ne fe, ne non ryche wede;
þer is a chyld in Bedlem born xal[1] helpyn vs at our nede.'

9 'þat is al so soþ,[2] Stevyn, al so soþ, iwys,
As þis capoun crowe xal þat lyþ here in myn dysh.'

10 þat word was not so sone seyd, þat word in þat halle,
þe capoun crew *Cristus natus est!* among þe lordes alle. 20

11 'Rysyt[3] vp, myn turmentowres,[4] be to *and* al be on,
And ledyt Stevyn out of þis town, *and* stonyt hym *wyth* ston!'

12 Tokyn he Stevene, *and* stonyd hym in the way,
And þerfore is his evyn on Crystes owyn day.

JUDAS[5]

1 Hit wes upon a Sceresporsday[6] þat ure louerd aros;
Ful milde were þe wordes he spec[7] to Iudas.

2 'Iudas, þou most to Iurselem, oure mete for to bugge;[8]
þritti platen of selver þou bere up oþi rugge.[9]

3 'þou comest fer iþe[10] brode stret, fer iþe brode strete;
Summe of þine tunesmen þer þou meist i-mete.'

4 Imette wid is soster, þe swikele[11] wimon:
'Iudas, þou were wrþe[12] me stende[13] þe wid ston;

5 ['Iudas, þou were wrþe me stende þe wid ston,]
For þe false prophete þat tou bilevest upon.' 10

6 'Be stille, leve soster, þin herte þe to-breke![14]
Wiste min louerd Crist, ful wel he wolde be wreke.'[15]

7 'Iudas, go þou on þe roc, heie up-on þe ston;
Lei þin heued i my barm,[16] slep þou þe anon.'

8 Sone so Iudas of slepe was awake,
þritti platen of selver from hym weren itake.

9 He drou hym selue bi þe cop, þat al it lavede ablode;[17]
þe Iewes out of Iurselem awenden[18] he were wode.[19]

10 Foret[20] hym com þe riche Ieu þat heiste[21] Pilatus:
'Wolte sulle[22] þi louerd, þat hette[23] Iesus?' 20

11 'I nul[24] sulle my louerd for nones cunnes eiste,[25]
Bote hit be for þe þritti platen þat he me bi-taiste.'[26]

12 'Wolte sulle þi lord Crist for enes cunnes golde?'
'Nay, bote hit be for þe platen þat he habben wolde.'[27]

13 In him com ur lord gon, as is postles seten at mete:
'Wou[28] sitte ye, postles, ant wi nule[29] ye ete?

14 ['Wou sitte ye, postles, ant wi nule ye ete?]
Ic am iboust[30] ant isold to-day for oure mete.'

15 Vp stod him Iudas: 'Lord, am I þat . . .?
I nas[31] never oþe stude[32] þer me þe euel spec.'[33] 30

[1] shall. [2] sooth, true. [3] Rise. [4] executioners. [5] The oldest of our ballad manuscripts, being from MS. B 14, 39, of the thirteenth century, library of Trinity College, Cambridge. [6] Sheer Thursday. [7] spake. [8] buy. [9] upon thy back. [10] in the, [11] treacherous. [12] worthy [13] one stoned.

[14] may thy heart break. [15] avenged. [16] bosom. [17] He tore his hair (beat his head) till it all ran blood. [18] weened. [19] mad. [20] Before. [21] was called. [22] Wilt thou sell. [23] is called. [24] will not. [25] no kind of possession. [26] entrusted to. [27] wished to have. [28] how. [29] why will not. [30] bought. [31] was not. [32] in the place. [33] where one spoke evil of you.

16 Vp him stod Peter, ant spec wid al is miste,[1]
þau Pilatus him come wid ten hundred cnistes,[2]

17 [' þau Pilatus him com wid ten hundred cnistes,]
Yet ic wolde, louerd, for þi loue fiste.'[3]

18 'Still þou be, Peter, wel I þe i-cnowe;
þou wolt fur-sake me þrien[4] ar þe coc him crowe.'

THE THREE RAVENS

1 THERE were three ravens sat on a tree,
Downe a downe, hay down, hay downe
There were three ravens sat on a tree,
With a downe
There were three ravens sat on a tree,
They were as blacke as they might be.
With a downe derrie, derrie, derrie, downe, downe.

2 The one of them said to his mate,
'Where shall we our breakefast take?'

3 'Downe in yonder greene field,
There lies a knight slain under his shield.

4 'His hounds they lie downe at his feete,
So well they can their master keepe.

5 'His haukes they flie so eagerly,
There 's no fowle dare him come nie.'

6 Downe there comes a fallow doe,
As great with yong as she might goe.

7 She lift up his bloudy hed,
And kist his wounds that were so red.

8 She got him up vpon her backe,
And carried him to earthen lake.[5]

9 She buried him before the prime,
She was dead herselfe ere even-song time.

10 God send every gentleman,
Such haukes, such hounds, and such a leman.[6]

[1] might. [2] knights. [3] fight. [4] thrice. [5] pit. [6] sweetheart.

THE TWA CORBIES

1 As I was walking all alane,
I heard twa corbies making a mane[7];
The tane unto the t'other say,
'Where sall we gang and dine to-day?'

2 'In behint yon auld fail[8] dyke,
I wot there lies a new slain knight;
And naebody kens that he lies there,
But his hawk, his hound, and lady fair.

3 'His hound is to the hunting gane,
His hawk to fetch the wild-fowl hame,
His lady 's ta'en another mate,
So we may mak our dinner sweet.

4 'Ye 'll sit on his white hause-bane,[9]
And I 'll pike out his bonny blue een;
Wi ae lock o his gowden hair
We 'll theek[10] our nest when it grows bare.

5 'Mony a one for him makes mane,
But nane sall ken where he is gane;
Oer his white banes, when they are bare,
The wind sall blaw for evermair.'

KING HENRY[11]

1 LAT never a man a wooing wend
That lacketh thingis three;
A routh[12] o gold, an open heart,
Ay fu o charity.

2 As this I speak of King Henry,
For he lay burd-alone;[13]
An he 's doen him to a jelly hunt's ha,[14]
Was seven miles frae a town.

3 He chas'd the deer now him before,
An the roe down by the den,
Till the fattest buck in a' the flock
King Henry he has slain.

4 O he has doen him to his ha,
To make him beerly[15] cheer;
An in it came a griesly ghost,
Steed stappin i the fleer.[16]

[7] moan. [8] turf. [9] neck-bone. [10] thatch.
[11] A more polished version of this story is found in the mutilated ballad of *The Marriage of Sir Gawain* (No. 31 in Child). There are several Celtic analogues, some of great age. The whole set is discussed in G. H. Maynadier's *Wife of Bath's Tale*, London, 1901.
[12] plenty. [13] quite solitary. [14] a jolly hunting-lodge. [15] great. [16] Stood hesitating on the floor.

5 Her head hat the reef-tree[1] o the house,
Her middle ye mot wel span;
He 's thrown to her his gay mantle,
Says, 'Lady, hap your lingcan.'[2]

6 Her teeth was a' like teather stakes,
Her nose like club or mell;[3]
An I ken naething she 'peard to be,
But the fiend that wons[4] in hell.

7 'Some meat, some meat, ye King Henry,
Some meat ye gi to me!'
'An what meat 's in this house, lady,
An what ha I to gie?'
'O ye do kill your berry-brown steed,
An you bring him here to me.'

8 O whan he slew his berry-brown steed,
Wow but his heart was sair!
Shee eat him [a'] up, skin an bane,
Left neathing but hide an hair.

9 'Mair meat, mair meat, ye King Henry,
Mair meat ye gi to me!'
'An what meat 's in this house, lady,
An what ha I to gi?'
'O ye do kill your good gray-hounds,
An ye bring them a' to me.'

10 O whan he slew his good gray-hounds,
Wow but his heart was sair!
She eat them a' up, skin an bane,
Left naething but hide an hair.

11 'Mair meat, mair meat, ye King Henry,
Mair meat ye gi to me!'
'An what meat 's i this house, lady,
An what ha I to gi?'
'O ye do kill your gay gos-hawks,
An ye bring them here to me.'

12 O whan he slew his gay gos-hawks,
Wow but his heart was sair!
She eat them a' up, skin an bane,
Left naething but feathers bare.

13 'Some drink, some drink, now, King Henry,
Some drink ye bring to me!'
'O what drink 's i this house, lady,
That you 're nae welcome ti?'
'O ye sew up your horse's hide,
An bring in a drink to me.'

[1] hit the roof-tree. [2] wrap your body.
[3] maul. [4] dwells.

14 And he 's sewd up the bloody hide,
A puncheon o wine put in;
She drank it a' up at a waught,[5]
Left na ae drap ahin.[6]

15 'A bed, a bed, now, King Henry,
A bed you mak to me!
For ye maun pu the heather green,
An mak a bed to me.'

16 O pu'd has he the heather green,
An made to her a bed,
An up has he taen his gay mantle,
An oer it has he spread.

17 'Tak aff your claiths, now, King Henry,
An lye down by my side!'
'O God forbid,' says King Henry,
'That ever the like betide;
That ever the fiend that wons in hell
Shoud streak[7] down by my side.'

. . . . . .

18 Whan night was gane, and day was come,
An the sun shone throw the ha,
The fairest lady that ever was seen
Lay atween him an the wa.

19 'O well is me!' says King Henry,
'How lang 'll this last wi me?'
Then out it spake that fair lady,
'Even till the day you dee.

20 'For I 've met wi mony a gentle knight
That 's gien me sic a fill,
But never before wi a courteous knight
That ga me a' my will.'

KEMP OWYNE[8]

1 Her mother died when she was young.
Which gave her cause to make great moan;
Her father married the warst woman
That ever lived in Christendom.

2 She served her with foot and hand,
In every thing that she could dee,[9]
Till once, in an unlucky time,
She threw her in ower Craigy's sea.

[5] draught. [6] behind. [7] stretch.
[8] Also called *Kempion*. Owyne is Owain or Ywain, one of Arthur's knights, who in the romances has many adventures, but not this. Disenchantment thus by a kiss is a commonplace in romance. [9] do.

3 Says, 'Lie you there, dove Isabel,
And all my sorrows lie with thee;
Till Kemp Owyne come over the sea,
And borrow [1] you with kisses three,
Let all the warld do what they will,
Oh borrowed shall you never be!'

4 Her breath grew strang, her hair grew lang,
And twisted thrice about the tree,
And all the people, far and near,
Thought that a savage beast was she.

5 These news did come to Kemp Owyne,
Where he lived, far beyond the sea;
He hasted him to Craigy's sea,
And on the savage beast lookd he.

6 Her breath was strang, her hair was lang,
And twisted was about the tree,
And with a swing she came about:
'Come to Craigy's sea, and kiss with me.

7 'Here is a royal belt,' she cried,
'That I have found in the green sea;
And while your body it is on,
Drawn shall your blood never be;
But if you touch me, tail or fin,
I vow my belt your death shall be.'

8 He stepped in, gave her a kiss,
The royal belt he brought him wi;
Her breath was strang, her hair was lang,
And twisted twice about the tree,
And with a swing she came about:
'Come to Craigy's sea, and kiss with me.

9 'Here is a royal ring,' she said,
'That I have found in the green sea;
And while your finger it is on,
Drawn shall your blood never be;
But if you touch me, tail or fin,
I swear my ring your death shall be.'

10 He stepped in, gave her a kiss,
The royal ring he brought him wi;
Her breath was strang, her hair was lang,
And twisted ance about the tree,
And with a swing she came about:
'Come to Craigy's sea, and kiss with me.

[1] ransom.

11 'Here is a royal brand,' she said,
'That I have found in the green sea;
And while your body it is on,
Drawn shall your blood never be;
But if you touch me, tail or fin,
I swear my brand your death shall be.'

12 He stepped in, gave her a kiss,
The royal brand he brought him wi;
Her breath was sweet, her hair grew short,
And twisted nane about the tree,
And smilingly she came about,
As fair a woman as fair could be.

THE LAILY WORM AND THE MACHREL OF THE SEA

1 'I WAS bat seven year alld
Fan [2] my mider she did dee,
My father marrëd the ae [3] warst woman
The wardle [4] did ever see.

2 'For she has made me the lailly [5] worm
That lays att the fitt [6] of the tree,
An o my sister Meassry
The machrel of the sea.

3 'An every Saterday att noon
The machrl comes to me,
An she takes my laylë head,
An lays it on her knee,
An keames it we a silver kemm,[7]
An washes it in the sea.

4 'Seven knights ha I slain
Sane [8] I lay att the fitt of the tree;
An ye war na my ain father,
The eight an ye sud be.'

5 'Sing on your song, ye l[a]ily worm,
That ye sung to me;'
'I never sung that song
But fatt [9] I wad sing to ye.

6 'I was but seven year auld
Fan my mider she [did] dee,
My father marrëd the a warst woman
The wardle did ever see.

[2] When. [3] one. [4] world. [5] loathly.
[6] foot. [7] combs it with a silver comb.
[8] Since. [9] what.

7 'She changed me to the layel[y] worm
That layes att the fitt of the tree,
An my sister Messry
[To] the makrell of the sea.

8 'And every Saterday att noon
The machrell comes to me,
An she takes my layly head,
An layes it on her knee,
An kames it weth a siller kame,
An washes it in the sea.

9 'Seven knights ha I slain
San I lay att the fitt of the tree;
An ye war na my ain father,
The eight ye sud be.'

10 He sent for his lady
As fast as sen cod[1] he:
'Far[2] is my son,
That ye sent fra me,
And my daughter,
Lady Messry?'

11 'Yer son is att our king's court,
Sarving for meatt an fee,
And yer daugh[t]er is att our quin's court,
A mary suit[3] an free.'

12 'Ye lee,[4] ye ill woman,
Sa loud as I hear ye lea,
For my son is the layelly worm
That lays at the fitt of the tree,
An my daughter Messry
The machrell of the sea.'

13 She has tain a silver wan
An gine him stroks three,
An he started up the bravest knight
Your eyes did ever see.

14 She has tane a small horn
An loud an shill[5] blue she,
An a' the fish came her tell[6] but the proud machrell,
An she stood by the sea:
Ye shaped me ance an unshemly shape,
An ye 's never mare shape me.'

15 He has sent to the wood
For hathorn an fun,[7]
An he has tane that gay lady,
An ther he did her burne.

[1] send could. [2] Where. [3] maid-of-honor sweet.
[4] lie. [5] shrill. [6] to. [7] whin, gorse.

THOMAS RYMER AND THE QUEEN OF ELFLAND[8]

1 True Thomas lay oer yond grassy bank,
And he beheld a ladie gay,
A ladie that was brisk and bold,
Come riding oer the fernie brae.

2 Her skirt was of the grass-green silk,
Her mantel of the velvet fine,
At ilka tett[9] of her horse's mane
Hung fifty silver bells and nine.

3 True Thomas he took off his hat,
And bowed him low down till his knee:
'Al hail, thou mighty Queen of Heaven!
For your peer on earth I never did see.'

4 'O no, O no, True Thomas,' she says,
'That name does not belong to me;
I am but the queen of fair Elfland,
And I 'm come here for to visit thee.

5 'But ye maun go wi me now, Thomas,
True Thomas, ye maun go wi me,
For ye maun serve me seven years,
Thro weel or wae as may chance to be.'

6 She turned about her milk-white steed
And took True Thomas up behind,
And aye wheneer her bridle rang,
The steed flew swifter than the wind.

7 For forty days and forty nights
He wade thro red blude to the knee,
And he saw neither sun nor moon,
But heard the roaring of the sea.

8 O they rade on, and further on,
Until they came to a garden green:
'Light down, light down, ye ladie free,
Some of that fruit let me pull to thee.'

9 'O no, O no, True Thomas,' she says,
'That fruit maun not be touched by thee,
For a' the plagues that are in hell
Light on the fruit of this countrie.

[8] For a discussion of this typical other-world journey and its relation to the fifteenth-century romance of *Thomas of Erceldoune*, see Child, I, 323. [9] tuft.

10 'But I have a loaf here in my lap,
Likewise a bottle of claret wine,
And now ere we go farther on,
We 'll rest a while, and ye may dine.'

11 When he had eaten and drunk his fill,
'Lay down your head upon my knee,'
The lady sayd, 'ere we climb yon hill,
And I will show you fairlies[1] three.

12 'O see not ye yon narrow road,
So thick beset wi thorns and briers?
That is the path of righteousness,
Tho after it but few enquires.

13 'And see not ye that braid braid road,
That lies across yon lillie leven?[2]
That is the path of wickedness,
Tho some call it the road to heaven.

14 'And see not ye that bonnie road,
Which winds about the fernie brae?
That is the road to fair Elfland,
Whe[re] you and I this night maun gae.

15 'But Thomas, ye maun hold your tongue,
Whatever you may hear or see,
For gin ae word you should chance to speak,
You will neer get back to your ain countrie.'

16 He has gotten a coat of the even[3] cloth,
And a pair of shoes of velvet green,
And till seven years were past and gone
True Thomas on earth was never seen.

THE WEE WEE MAN

1 As I was wa'king all alone,
Between a water and a wa,[4]
And there I spy'd a wee wee man,
And he was the least that ere I saw.

2 His legs were scarce a shathmont's[5] length,
And thick and thimber[6] was his thigh;
Between his brows there was a span,
And between his shoulders there was three.

3 He took up a meikle[7] stane,
And he flang 't as far as I could see;
Though I had been a Wallace wight,
I couldna liften 't to my knee.

4 'O wee wee man, but thou be strang!
O tell me where thy dwelling be?'
My dwelling 's down at yon bonny bower;
O will you go with me and see?'

5 On we lap,[8] and awa we rade,
Till we came to yon bonny green;
We lighted down for to bait our horse,
And out there came a lady fine.

6 Four and twenty at her back,
And they were a' clad out in green;
Though the King of Scotland had been there,
The warst o them might hae been his queen.

7 On we lap, and awa we rade,
Till we came to yon bonny ha,
Whare the roof was o the beaten gould,
And the floor was o the cristal a'.

8 When we came to the stair-foot,
Ladies were dancing, jimp and sma,
But in the twinkling of an eye,
My wee wee man was clean awa.

TAM LIN

1 O I FORBID you, maidens a',
That wear gowd on your hair,
To come or gae by Carterhaugh,
For young Tam Lin is there.

2 There 's nane that gaes by Carterhaugh
But they leave him a wad,[9]
Either their rings, or green mantles,
Or else their maidenhead.

3 Janet has kilted[10] her green kirtle
A little aboon[11] her knee,
And she has broded her yellow hair
A little aboon her bree,[12]
And she 's awa to Carterhaugh,
As fast as she can hie.

[1] wonders. [2] glade, lawn. [3] smooth.
[4] wall. [5] a palm, six inches. [6] great.
[7] great. [8] leaped. [9] pledge.
[10] tucked up. [11] above. [12] brow.

4 When she came to Carterhaugh
Tam Lin was at the well,
And there she fand his steed standing,
But away was himsel.

5 She had na pu'd a double rose,
A rose but only twa,
Till up then started young Tam Lin,
Says, 'Lady, thou 's pu nae mae.[1]

6 'Why pu's thou the rose, Janet,
And why breaks thou the wand?
Or why comes thou to Carterhaugh
Withoutten my command?'

7 'Carterhaugh, it is my ain,
My daddie gave it me;
I 'll come and gang by Carterhaugh,
And ask nae leave at thee.'

. . . . . .

8 Janet has kilted her green kirtle
A little aboon her knee,
And she has snooded[2] her yellow hair
A little aboon her bree,
And she is to her father's ha,
As fast as she can hie.

9 Four and twenty ladies fair
Were playing at the ba,
And out then cam the fair Janet,
Ance the flower amang them a'.

10 Four and twenty ladies fair
Were playing at the chess,
And out then cam the fair Janet,
As green as onie glass.

11 Out then spak an auld grey knight,
Lay oer the castle wa,
And says, 'Alas, fair Janet, for thee
But we 'll be blamed a'.'

12 'Haud your tongue, ye auld fac'd knight,
Some ill death may ye die!
Father my bairn on whom I will,
I 'll father nane on thee.'

13 Out then spak her father dear,
And he spak meek and mild;
'And ever alas, sweet Janet,' he says,
'I think thou gaes wi child.'

14 'If that I gae wi child, father,
Mysel maun bear the blame;
There 's neer a laird about your ha
Shall get the bairn's name.

15 'If my love were an earthly knight,
As he 's an elfin grey,
I wad na gie my ain true-love
For nae lord that ye hae.

16 'The steed that my true-love rides on
Is lighter than the wind;
Wi siller he is shod before,
Wi burning gowd behind.'

17 Janet has kilted her green kirtle
A little aboon her knee,
And she has snooded her yellow hair
A little aboon her bree,
And she 's awa to Carterhaugh,
As fast as she can hie.

18 When she cam to Carterhaugh,
Tam Lin was at the well,
And there she fand his steed standing,
But away was himsel.

19 She had na pu'd a double rose,
A rose but only twa,
Till up then started young Tam Lin,
Says, 'Lady, thou pu's nae mae.

20 'Why pu's thou the rose, Janet,
Amang the groves sae green,
And a' to kill the bonie babe
That we gat us between?'

21 'O tell me, tell me, Tam Lin,' she says,
'For 's sake that died on tree,
If eer ye was in holy chapel,
Or christendom did see?'

22 'Roxbrugh he was my grandfather,
Took me with him to bide,
And ance it fell upon a day
That wae did me betide.

23 'And ance it fell upon a day,
A cauld day and a snell,[3]
When we were frae the hunting come,
That frae my horse I fell;
The Queen o Fairies she caught me,
In yon green hill to dwell.

24 'And pleasant is the fairy land;
But, an eerie tale to tell,

[1] no more. [2] tied in a snood. [3] keen.

Ay at the end of seven years
We pay a tiend [1] to hell;
I am sae fair and fu o flesh,
I 'm feared it be mysel.

25 'But the night is Halloween, lady,
The morn is Hallowday;
Then win me, win me, an ye will,
For weel I wat ye may.

26 'Just at the mirk and midnight hour
The fairy folk will ride,
And they that wad their true-love win,
At Miles Cross they maun bide.'

27 'But how shall I thee ken, Tam Lin,
Or how my true-love know,
Amang sae mony unco [2] knights
The like I never saw?'

28 'O first let pass the black, lady,
And syne let pass the brown,
But quickly run to the milk-white steed,
Pu ye his rider down.

29 'For I 'll ride on the milk-white steed,
And ay nearest the town;
Because I was an earthly knight
They gie me that renown.

30 'My right hand will be glovd, lady,
My left hand will be bare,
Cockt up shall my bonnet be,
And kaimd down shall my hair,
And thae 's the takens I gie thee,
Nae doubt I will be there.

31 'They 'll turn me in your arms, lady,
Into an esk [3] and adder;
But hold me fast and fear me not,
I am your bairn's father.

32 'They 'll turn me to a bear sae grim,
And then a lion bold;
But hold me fast and fear me not,
As ye shall love your child.

33 'Again they 'll turn me in your arms
To a red het gaud of airn; [4]
But hold me fast, and fear me not,
I 'll do to you nae harm.

34 'And last they 'll turn me in your arms
Into the burning gleed; [5]
Then throw me into well water,
O throw me in wi speed.

35 'And then I 'll be your ain true-love,
I 'll turn a naked knight;
Then cover me wi your green mantle,
And cover me out o sight.'

36 Gloomy, gloomy was the night,
And eerie was the way,
As fair Jenny in her green mantle
To Miles Cross she did gae.

37 About the middle o the night
She heard the bridles ring;
This lady was as glad at that
As any earthly thing.

38 First she let the black pass by,
And syne she let the brown;
But quickly she ran to the milk-white steed,
And pu'd the rider down.

39 Sae weel she minded what he did say,
And young Tam Lin did win;
Syne coverd him wi her green mantle,
As blythe 's a bird in spring.

40 Out then spak the Queen o Fairies,
Out of a bush o broom:
'Them that has gotten young Tam Lin
Has gotten a stately groom.'

41 Out then spak the Queen o Fairies,
And an angry woman was she:
'Shame betide her ill-far'd [6] face,
And an ill death may she die,
For she 's taen awa the boniest knight
In a' my companie.

42 'But had I kend, Tam Lin,' she says,
'What now this night I see,
I wad hae taen out thy twa grey een,
And put in twa een o tree.' [7]

[1] tithe. [2] strange. [3] newt.
[4] red-hot bar of iron. [5] coal.

YOUNG AKIN OR HIND ETIN [8]

1 Lady Margaret sits in her bower door,
Sewing at her silken seam;
She heard a note in Elmond's wood,
And wishd she there had been.

[6] ill-favored. [7] wood.
[8] This story of a mortal and her fairy husband has suffered in the handing down of it.

2 She loot[1] the seam fa frae her side,
And the needle to her tae,
And she is on to Elmond's wood
As fast as she coud gae.

3 She hadna pu'd a nut, a nut,
Nor broken a branch but ane,
Till by it came a young hind chiel,[2]
Says, 'Lady, lat alane.

4 'O why pu ye the nut, the nut,
Or why brake ye the tree?
For I am forester o this wood:
Ye shoud spier[3] leave at me.'

5 'I 'll ask leave at no living man,
Nor yet will I at thee;
My father is king oer a' this realm,
This wood belongs to me.'

6 She hadna pu'd a nut, a nut,
Nor broken a branch but three,
Till by it came him Young Akin,
And gard her lat them be.

7 The highest tree in Elmond's wood,
He 's pu'd it by the reet[4]
And he has built for her a bower,
Near by a hallow[5] seat.

8 He 's built a bower, made it secure
Wi carbuncle and stane;
Tho travellers were never sae nigh,
Appearance it had nane.

9 He 's kept her there in Elmond's wood,
For six lang years and one,
Till six pretty sons to him she bear,
And the seventh she 's brought home.

10 It fell ance upon a day,
This guid lord went from home,
And he is to the hunting gane,
Took wi him his eldest son.

11 And when they were on a guid way,
Wi slowly pace did walk,
The boy's heart being something wae,
He thus began to talk:

12 'A question I woud ask, father,
Gin ye woudna angry be:'
'Say on, say on, my bonny boy,
Ye 'se nae be quarrelld by me.'

13 'I see my mither's cheeks aye weet,
I never can see them dry;
And I wonder what aileth my mither,
To mourn continually.'

14 'Your mither was a king's daughter,
Sprung frae a high degree,
And she might hae wed some worthy prince,
Had she nae been stown[6] by me.

15 'I was her father's cup-bearer,
Just at that fatal time;
I catchd her on a misty night,
Whan summer was in prime.

16 'My luve to her was most sincere,
Her luve was great for me,
But when she hardships doth endure,
Her folly she does see.'

17 'I 'll shoot the buntin o the bush,
The linnet o the tree,
And bring them to my dear mither,
See if she 'll merrier be.'

18 It fell upo another day,
This guid lord he thought lang,
And he is to the hunting gane,
Took wi him his dog and gun.

19 Wi bow and arrow by his side,
He 's aff, single, alane,
And left his seven children to stay
Wi their mither at hame.

20 'O I will tell to you, mither,
Gin ye wadna angry be:'
'Speak on, speak on, my little wee boy,
Ye 'se nae be quarrelld by me.'

21 'As we came frae the hynd-hunting,
We heard fine music ring:'
'My blessings on you, my bonny boy,
I wish I 'd been there my lane.'[7]

22 He 's taen his mither by the hand,
His six brithers also,
And they are on thro Elmond's wood,
As fast as they coud go.

23 They wistna weel where they were gaen,
Wi the stratlins[8] o their feet;
They wist na weel where they were gaen,
Till at her father's yate.[9]

[1] let. [2] courteous youth. [3] ask. [4] root. [5] hollow. [6] stolen. [7] alone. [8] stridings. [9] gate.

24 'I hae nae money in my pocket,
But royal rings hae three;
I 'll gie them you, my little young son,
And ye 'll walk there for me.

25 'Ye 'll gie the first to the proud porter,
And he will lat you in;
Ye 'll gie the next to the butler-boy,
And he will show you ben;[1]

26 'Ye 'll gie the third to the minstrel
That plays before the king;
He 'll play success to the bonny boy
Came thro the wood him lane.'[2]

27 He gae the first to the proud porter,
And he opend an let him in;
He gae the next to the butler-boy,
And he has shown him ben;

28 He gae the third to the minstrel
That playd before the king;
And he playd success to the bonny boy
Came thro the wood him lane.

29 Now when he came before the king,
Fell low down on his knee;
The king he turned round about,
And the saut tear blinded his ee.

30 'Win[3] up, win up, my bonny boy,
Gang frae my companie;
Ye look sae like my dear daughter,
My heart will birst in three.'

31 'If I look like your dear daughter,
A wonder it is none;
If I look like your dear daughter,
I am her eldest son.'

32 'Will ye tell me, ye little wee boy,
Where may my Margaret be?'
'She 's just now standing at your yates,
And my six brithers her wi.'

33 'O where are all my porter-boys
That I pay meat and fee,
To open my yates baith wide and braid?
Let her come in to me.'

34 When she came in before the king,
Fell low down on her knee;
'Win up, win up, my daughter dear,
This day ye 'll dine wi me.'

35 'Ae bit I canno eat, father,
Nor ae drop can I drink,
Till I see my mither and sister dear,
For lang for them I think.'

36 When she came before the queen,
Fell low down on her knee;
'Win up, win up, my daughter dear,
This day ye 'se dine wi me.'

37 'Ae bit I canno eat, mither,
Nor ae drop can I drink,
Until I see my dear sister,
For lang for her I think.'

38 When that these two sisters met,
She haild her courteouslie;
'Come ben, come ben, my sister dear,
This day ye 'se dine wi me.'

39 'Ae bit I canno eat, sister,
Nor ae drop can I drink,
Until I see my dear husband,
For lang for him I think.'

40 'O where are all my rangers bold
That I pay meat and fee,
To search the forest far an wide,
And bring Akin to me?'

41 Out it speaks the little wee boy:
'Na, na, this maunna[4] be;
Without ye grant a free pardon,
I hope ye 'll nae him see.'

42 'O here I grant a free pardon,
Well seald by my own han;
Ye may make search for Young Akin,
As soon as ever you can.'

43 They searchd the country wide and braid,
The forests far and near,
And found him into Elmond's wood,
Tearing his yellow hair.

44 'Win up, win up now, Young Akin,
Win up, and boun[5] wi me;
We 're messengers come from the court,
The king wants you to see.'

45 'O lat him take frae me my head,
Or hang me on a tree;
For since I 've lost my dear lady,
Life 's no pleasure to me.'

[1] in. [2] alone. [3] Get. [4] must not. [5] go.

46 'Your head will nae be touchd, Akin,
Nor hangd upon a tree;
Your lady 's in her father's court,
And all he wants is thee.'

47 When he came in before the king,
Fell low down on his knee;
'Win up, win up now, Young Akin,
This day ye 'se dine wi me.'

48 But as they were at dinner set,
The boy asked a boun:
'I wish we were in the good church,
For to get christendoun.

49 'We hae lived in guid green wood
This seven years and ane;
But a' this time, since eer I mind,
Was never a church within.'

50 'Your asking 's nae sae great, my boy,
But granted it shall be;
This day to guid church ye shall gang,
And your mither shall gang you wi.'

51 When unto the guid church she came,
She at the door did stan;
She was sae sair sunk down wi shame,
She coudna come farer ben.

52 Then out it speaks the parish priest,
And a sweet smile gae he:
'Come ben, come ben, my lily flower,
Present your babes to me.'

53 Charles, Vincent, Sam and Dick,
And likewise James and John;
They calld the eldest Young Akin,
Which was his father's name.

54 Then they staid in the royal court,
And livd wi mirth and glee,
And when her father was deceasd,
Heir of the crown was she.

CLERK COLVILL

1 Clark Colven and his gay ladie,
As they walked to yon garden green,
A belt about her middle gimp,[1]
Which cost Clark Colven crowns fifteen:

[1] slender.

2 'O hearken weel now, my good lord,
O hearken weel to what I say;
When ye gang to the wall o Stream,
O gang nae neer the well-fared may.'[2]

3 'O haud your tongue, my gay ladie,
Tak nae sic care o me;
For I nae saw a fair woman
I like so well as thee.'

4 He mounted on his berry-brown steed,
And merry, merry rade he on,
Till he came to the wall o Stream,
And there he saw the mermaiden.

5 'Ye wash, ye wash, ye bonny may,
And ay 's ye wash your sark o silk:'
'It 's a' for you, ye gentle knight,
My skin is whiter than the milk.'

6 He 's taen her by the milk-white hand,
He 's taen her by the sleeve sae green,
And he 's forgotten his gay ladie,
And away with the fair maiden.

. . . . . .

7 'Ohon, alas!' says Clark Colven,
'And aye sae sair 's I mean my head!'
And merrily leugh[3] the mermaiden,
'O win on till you be dead.

8 'But out ye tak your little pen-knife,
And frae my sark ye shear a gare;[4]
Row[5] that about your lovely head,
And the pain ye 'll never feel nae mair.'

9 Out he has taen his little pen-knife,
And frae her sark he 's shorn a gare,
Rowed that about his lovely head,
But the pain increased mair and mair.

10 'Ohon, alas!' says Clark Colven,
'An aye sae sair 's I mean my head!'
And merrily laughd the mermaiden,
'It will ay be war[6] till ye be dead.'

11 Then out he drew his trusty blade,
And thought wi it to be her dead,[7]
But she 's become a fish again,
And merrily sprang into the fleed.

[2] well-favored maid. [3] laughed. [4] gore, strip.
[5] Roll. [6] worse. [7] death.

12 He 's mounted on his berry-brown steed,
And dowy, dowy rade he home,
And heavily, heavily lighted down
When to his ladie's bower-door he came.

13 'Oh, mither, mither, mak my bed,
And, gentle ladie, lay me down;
Oh, brither, brither, unbend my bow,
'T will never be bent by me again.'

14 His mither she has made his bed,
His gentle ladie laid him down,
His brither he has unbent his bow,
'T was never bent by him again.

KING JOHN AND THE BISHOP[1]

1 Off an ancient story Ile tell you anon,
Of a notable prince *that* was called *King* Iohn,
In England was borne, with maine and with might;
Hee did much wrong and mainteined litle right.

2 This noble prince was vexed in veretye,
For he was angry with the Bishopp of Canterbury;
Ffor his house-keeping and his good cheere,
Thé[2] rode post for him, as you shall heare.

3 They rode post for him verry hastilye;
The *king* sayd the bishopp kept a better house then hee:
A hundred men even, as I [have heard] say,
The bishopp kept in his house *every*e day,
And fifty gold chaines, *with*out any doubt,
In velvett coates waited the bishopp about.

4 The bishopp, he came to the court anon,
Before his prince *that* was called *King* Iohn.
As soone as the bishopp the *king* did see,
'O,' *quo*th the *king*, 'bishopp, thow art welcome to mee.
There is noe man soe welcome to towne
As thou *that* workes treason against my crowne.'

5 'My leege,' *quo*th the bishopp, 'I wold it were knowne
I spend, *your* grace, nothing but *that* *that* 's my owne;
I trust *your* grace will doe me noe deare[3]
For spending my owne trew gotten geere.'

6 'Yes,' *quo*th the *king*, 'bishopp, thou must needs dye,
Eccept thou can answere mee questions three;
Thy head shalbe smitten quite from thy bodye,
And all thy living remayne unto mee.

7 'First,' *quo*th the *king*, 'tell me in this steade,
With this crowne of gold heere vpon my head,
Amongst my nobilitye, *with* ioy and much mirth,
Lett me know *with*in one pennye what I am worth.

8 'Secondlye, tell me *with*out any dowbt.
How soone I may goe the whole world about;
And thirdly, tell mee or *ever* I stinte,
What is the thing, bishopp, *that* I doe thinke.
Twenty dayes pardon thoust[4] have trulye,
And come againe and answere mee.'

9 The bishopp bade the *king* god night att a word;
He rode betwixt Cambridge and Oxenford,
But *never* a doctor there was soe wise
Cold shew him these questions or enterprise.

10 Wherewith the bishopp was nothing gladd,
But in his hart was heavy and sadd,
And hyed him home to a house in the countrye,
To ease some *part* of his melanchollye.

[1] This story appears to be of Oriental origin, and there are many versions of it East and West. [2] They. [3] harm. [4] thou shalt.

11 His halfe-brother dwelt there, was feirce and fell,
Noe better but a shepard to the bishoppe himsell;
The shepard came to the bishopp anon,
Saying, 'My Lord, you are welcome home!'

12 'What ayles you,' quoth the shepard,
'*that* you are soe sadd,
And had wonte to have beene soe merry and gladd?'
'Nothing,' quoth the bishopp, 'I ayle att this time;
Will not thee availe to know, brother mine.'

13 'Brother,' quoth the shepeard, 'you have heard itt,
That a ffoole may teach a wisemane witt;
Say me therfore whatsoever you will,
And if I doe you noe good, Ile doe you noe ill.'

14 Quoth the bishop: 'I have beene att the court anon,
Before my prince is called *King* Iohn,
And there he hath charged mee
Against his crowne with traitorye.

15 'If I cannott answer his misterye,
Three questions hee hath propounded to mee,
He will have my land soe faire and free,
And alsoe the head from my bodye.

16 'The first question was, to tell him in *that* stead,
With the crowne of gold vpon his head,
Amongst his nobilitye, with ioy and much mirth,
To lett him know within one penye what hee is worth.

17 'And secondlye, to tell him with-out any doubt
How soone he may goe the whole world about;
And thirdlye, to tell him, or ere I stint,
What is the thinge *that* he does thinke.'

18 'Brother,' quoth the shepard, 'you are a man of learninge;
What neede you stand in doubt of soe small a thinge?
Lend me,' quoth the shepard, 'your ministers apparrell,
Ile ryde to the court and answere your quarrell.

19 'Lend me your serving men, say me not nay,
With all your best horsses *that* ryd on the way;
Ile to the court, this matter to stay;
Ile speake with *King* Iohn and heare what heele say.'

20 The bishopp with speed prepared then
To sett forth the shepard with horsse and man;
The shepard was lively without any doubt;
I wott a royall companye came to the court.

21 The shepard hee came to the court anon
Before [his] prince *that* was called *King* Iohn.
As soone as the *king* the shepard did see.
'O,' quoth the king, 'bishopp, thou art welcome to me.'
The shepard was soe like the bishopp his brother,
The *king* cold not know the one from the other.

22 Quoth the *king*, 'Bishopp, thou art welcome to me
If thou can answer me my questions three.'
Said the shepeard, 'If it please your grace,
Show mee what the first quest[i]on was.'

23 'First,' quoth the *king*, 'tell mee in this stead,
With the crowne of gold vpon my head,
Amongst my nobilitye, with ioy and much mirth,
Within one pennye what I am worth.'

24 Quoth the shepard. 'To make your grace noe offence,
I thinke you are worth nine and twenty pence;
For our Lord Iesus, *that* bought vs all,
For thirty pence was sold into thrall

Amongst the cursed Iewes, as I to you doe showe;
But I know Christ was one penye better then you.'

25 Then the *king* laught, and swore by St Andrew
He was not thought to bee of such a small value.
'Secondlye, tell mee with-out any doubt
How soone I may goe the world round about.'

26 Saies the shepard, 'It is noe time with *your* grace to scorne,
But rise betime with the sun in the morne,
And follow his course till his uprising,
And then you may know without any leasing.[1]

27 'And this [to] *your* grace shall prove the same,
You are come to the same place from whence you came;
[In] twenty-four houres, with-out any doubt,
Your grace may the world goe round about;
The world round about, even as I doe say,
If with the sun you can goe the next way.'

28 'And thirdlye tell me or ever I stint,
What is the thing, bishoppe, *that* I doe thinke.'
'*That* shall I doe,' quoth the shepeard; 'for veretye,
You thinke I am the bishopp of Canterburye.'

29 'Why, art not thou? the truth tell to me;
For I doe thinke soe,' quoth the *king*, 'by St Marye.'
'Not soe,' quoth the shepeard; 'the truth shalbe knowne,
I am his poore shepeard; my brother is att home.'

30 'Why,' quoth the *king*, 'if itt soe bee,
Ile make thee bishopp here to mee.'

[1] lying.

'Noe, Sir,' quoth the shepard, 'I pray you be still,
For Ile not bee bishop but against my will;
For I am not fitt for any such deede,
For I can neither write nor reede.'

31 'Why then,' quoth the *king*, 'Ile give thee cleere
A pattent of three hundred pound a yeere;
That I will give thee franke and free;
Take thee *that*, shepard, for coming to me.

32 'Free pardon Ile give,' the *kings* grace said,
'To save the bishopp, his land and his head;
With him nor thee Ile be nothing wrath;
Here is the pardon for him and thee both.'

33 Then the shepard he had noe more to say,
But tooke the pardon and rode his way:
When he came to the bishopps place,
The bishopp asket anon how all things was.

34 'Brother,' quoth the shepard, 'I have well sped,
For I have saved both your land and your head;
The *king* with you is nothing wrath,
For heere is the pardon for you and mee both.'

35 Then the bishopes hart was of a merry cheere:
'Brother, thy paines Ile quitt them cleare;
For I will give thee a patent to thee and to thine
Of fifty pound a yeere, land good and fine.'

36 . . . . . .
. . . . . .
'I will to thee noe longer croche[2] nor creepe,
Nor Ile serve thee noe more to keepe thy sheepe.'

[2] crouch.

37 Whereever wist you shepard before,
That had in his head witt such store
To pleasure a bishopp in such a like case,
To answer three questions to the *kings* grace?
Whereever wist you shepard gett cleare
Three hundred and fifty pound a yeere?

38 I never hard of his fellow before,
Nor I never shall: now I need to say noe more.
I never knew shepeard *that* gott such a livinge
But David, the shepeard, *that* was a *king*.

YOUNG BICHAM[1]

1 In London city was Bicham born,
He longd strange countries for to see,
But he was taen by a savage Moor,
Who handld him right cruely.

2 For thro his shoulder he put a bore,[2]
An thro the bore has pitten a tree,[3]
An he 's gard[4] him draw the carts o wine,
Where horse and oxen had wont to be.

3 He 's casten [him] in a dungeon deep,
Where he coud neither hear nor see;
He 's shut him up in a prison strong,
And he 's handld him right cruely.

4 O this Moor he had but ae daughter,
I wot her name was Shusy Pye;
She 's doen her to the prison-house,
And she 's calld Young Bicham one word by.

5 'O hae ye ony lands or rents,
Or citys in your ain country,
Coud free you out of prison strong,
An coud mantain a lady free?'

6 'O London city is my own,
An other citys twa or three
Coud loose me out o prison strong,
An coud mantain a lady free.'

7 O she has bribed her father's men
Wi meikle goud[5] and white money,
She 's gotten the key o the prison doors,
An she has set Young Bicham free.

8 She 's gi'n him a loaf o good white bread,
But an a flask o Spanish wine,
An she bad him mind on the ladie's love
That sae kindly freed him out o pine.

9 'Go set your foot on good ship-board,
An haste you back to your ain country,
An before that seven years has an end,
Come back again, love, and marry me.'

10 It was long or seven years had an end
She longd fu sair her love to see;
She 's set her foot on good ship-board,
An turnd her back on her ain country.

11 She 's saild up, so has she doun,
Till she came to the other side;
She 's landed at Young Bicham's gates,
An I hop this day she sal be his bride.

12 'Is this Young Bicham's gates?' says she,
'Or is that noble prince within?'
'He 's up the stairs wi his bonny bride,
An monny a lord and lady wi him.'

13 'O has he taen a bonny bride,
An has he clean forgotten me!'
An sighing said that gay lady,
'I wish I were in my ain country!'

14 But she 's pitten her han in her pocket,
An gin[6] the porter guineas three;
Says, 'Take ye that, ye proud porter,
An bid the bridegroom speak to me.'

15 O whan the porter came up the stair,
He 's fa'n low down upon his knee:
'Won[7] up, won up, ye proud porter,
An what makes a' this courtesy?'

16 'O I 've been porter at your gates
This mair nor seven years an three,
But there is a lady at them now
The like of whom I never did see.

17 'For on every finger she has a ring,
An on the mid-finger she has three,
An there 's as meikle goud[8] aboon her brow
As woud buy an earldome o lan to me.'

[1] *Lord Bateman* is a later version of this popular theme.
[2] hole. [3] put a stick. [4] compelled. [5] much gold.
[6] given. [7] Get. [8] much gold.

18 Then up it started Young Bicham,
An sware so loud by Our Lady,
'It can be nane but Shushy Pye,
That has come oer the sea to me.'

19 O quickly ran he down the stair,
O' fifteen steps he has made but three;
He 's tane his bonny love in his arms,
An a wot he kissd her tenderly.

20 'O hae you taen a bonny bride?
An hae you quite forsaken me?
An hae ye quite forgotten her
That gae you life an liberty?'

21 She 's lookit oer her left shoulder
To hide the tears stood in her ee;
'Now fare thee well, Young Bicham,' she says,
'I 'll strive to think nae mair on thee.'

22 'Take back your daughter, madam,' he says,
'An a double dowry I 'll gi her wi;
For I maun marry my first true love,
That 's done and suffered so much for me.'

23 He 's take his bonny love by the han,
And led her to yon fountain stane;
He 's changd her name frae Shusy Pye,
An he 's cald her his bonny love, Lady Jane.

THE CHERRY-TREE CAROL[1]

1 Joseph was an old man,
and an old man was he,
When he wedded Mary,
in the land of Galilee.

2 Joseph and Mary walked
through an orchard good,
Where was cherries and berries,
so red as any blood.

3 Joseph and Mary walked
through an orchard green,
Where was berries and cherries,
as thick as might be seen.

4 O then bespoke Mary,
so meek and so mild:
'Pluck me one cherry, Joseph,
for I am with child.'

5 O then bespoke Joseph,
with words most unkind:
'Let him pluck thee a cherry
that brought thee with child.'

6 O then bespoke the babe,
within his mother's womb:
'Bow down then the tallest tree,
for my mother to have some.'

7 Then bowed down the highest tree
unto his mother's hand;
Then she cried, 'See, Joseph,
I have cherries at command.'

8 O then bespake Joseph:
'I have done Mary wrong;
But cheer up, my dearest,
and be not cast down.'

9 Then Mary plucked a cherry,
as red as the blood,
Then Mary went home
with her heavy load.

10 Then Mary took her babe,
and sat him on her knee,
Saying, 'My dear son, tell me
what this world will be.'

11 'O I shall be as dead, mother,
as the stones in the wall;
O the stones in the streets, mother,
shall mourn for me all.

12 'Upon Easter-day, mother,
my uprising shall be;
O the sun and the moon, mother,
shall both rise with me.'

SIR PATRICK SPENCE[2]

1 The king sits in Dumferling toune,
Drinking the blude-reid wine:
'O whar will I get guid sailor,
To sail this schip of mine?'

[1] This story is founded on the gospel of the *Pseudo-Matthew*, xx.

[2] One of the best ballads, historical sounding, but not historical in any strict sense.

2 Up and spak an eldern knicht,
Sat at the kings richt kne:
'Sir Patrick Spence is the best sailor
That sails upon the se.'

3 The king has written a braid[1] letter,
And signd it wi his hand,
And sent it to Sir Patrick Spence,
Was walking on the sand.

4 The first line that Sir Patrick red,
A loud lauch[2] lauched he;
The next line that Sir Patrick red,
The teir blinded his ee.

5 'O wha is this has don this deid,
This ill deid don to me,
To send me out this time o' the yeir,
To sail upon the se!

6 'Mak hast, mak haste, my mirry men all,
Our guid schip sails the morne:'
'O say na sae, my master deir,
For I feir a deadlie storme.

7 'Late late yestreen I saw the new moone,
Wi the auld moone in hir arme,
And I feir, I feir, my deir master,
That we will cum to harme.'

8 O our Scots nobles wer richt laith
To weet their cork-heild schoone;
Bot lang owre[3] a' the play wer playd,
Thair hats they swam aboone.[4]

9 O lang, lang may their ladies sit,
Wi thair fans into their hand,
Or eir they se Sir Patrick Spence
Cum sailing to the land.

10 O lang, lang may the ladies stand,
Wi thair gold kems[5] in their hair,
Waiting for thair ain deir lords,
For they 'll se thame na mair.

11 Haf owre, haf owre to Aberdour,
It 's fiftie fadom deip,
And thair lies guid Sir Patrick Spence,
Wi the Scots lords at his feit.

[1] broad. [2] laugh. [3] before.
[4] above. [5] combs.

KING ESTMERE[6]

1 HEARKEN to me, gentlemen,
Come and you shall heare;
Ile tell you of two of the boldest brether
That ever borne were.

2 The tone of them was Adler Younge,
The tother was Kyng Estmere;
The were as bolde men in their deeds
As any were, farr and neare.

3 As they were drinking ale and wine
Within his brother's hall,
'When will ye marry a wyfe, brother,
A wyfe to glad us all?'

4 Then bespake him Kyng Estmere,
And answered him hartilye:
'I know not that ladye in any land,
That 's able to marrye with mee.'

5 'Kyng Adland hath a daughter, brother,
Men call her bright and sheene;
If I were kyng here in your stead,
That ladye shold be my queene.'

6 Saies, 'Reade[7] me, reade me, deare brother,
Throughout merry England,
Where we might find a messenger
Betwixt us towe to sende.'

7 Saies, 'You shal ryde yourselfe, brother,
Ile beare you companye;
Many a man throughe fals messengers is deceived,
And I feare lest soe shold wee.'

8 Thus the renisht[8] them to ryde,
Of twoe good renisht steeds,
And when the came to King Adlands halle,
Of redd gold shone their weeds.

9 And when the came to Kyng Adlands hall,
Before the goodlye gate,
There they found good Kyng Adland
Rearing himselfe theratt.

[6] We possess this spirited ballad, unfortunately, only as touched up by Bishop Percy. Adler and Estmere occur again in the *Percy Folio MS.*, ed. Hales and Furnivall, II, 296, and there Adler gets a fine wife.
[7] Advise. [8] they prepared.

10 'Now Christ thee save, good Kyng Adland;
Now Christ you save and see:'
Sayd, 'You be welcome, King Estmere,
Right hartilye to mee.'

11 'You have a daughter,' said Adler Younge,
'Men call her bright and sheene;
My brother wold marrye her to his wiffe,
Of Englande to be queene.'

12 'Yesterday was att my deere daughter
The king his sonne of Spayn,
And then she nicked him of naye,[1]
And I doubt sheele do you the same.'

13 'The kyng of Spayne is a foule paynim,
And 'leeveth on Mahound,[2]
And pitye it were that fayre ladye
Shold marry a heathen hound.'

14 'But grant to me,' sayes Kyng Estmere,
'For my love I you praye,
That I may see your daughter deere
Before I goe hence awaye.'

15 'Although itt is seven yeers and more
Since my daughter was in halle,
She shall come once downe for your sake,
To glad my guestës alle.'

16 Downe then came that mayden fayre,
With ladyes laced in pall,
And halfe a hundred of bold knightes,
To bring her [from] bowre to hall,
And as many gentle squiers,
To tend upon them all.

17 The talents of golde were on her head sette
Hanged low downe to her knee,
And everye ring on her small finger
Shone of the chrystall free.

18 Saies, 'God you save, my deere madam,'
Saies, 'God you save and see:'
Said, 'You be welcome, Kyng Estmere,
Right welcome unto mee.

19 'And, if you love me, as you saye,
Soe well and hartilee,
All that ever you are comen about
Soone sped now itt shal bee.'

20 Then bespake her father deare:
'My daughter, I saye naye;
Remember well the kyng of Spayne,
What he sayd yesterdaye.

21 'He wold pull downe my halles and castles,
And reave me of my lyfe;
I cannot blame him if he doe,
If I reave him of his wyfe.'

22 'Your castles and your towres, father,
Are stronglye built aboute,
And therefore of the king his sonne of Spaine
Wee neede not stande in doubt.

23 'Plight me your troth, nowe, Kyng Estmere,
By heaven and your righte hand,
That you will marrye me to your wife,
And make me queene of your land.'

24 Then Kyng Estmere he plight his troth,
By heaven and his righte hand,
That he wolde marrye her to his wyfe,
And make her queene of his land.

25 And he tooke leave of that ladye fayre,
To goe to his owne countree,
To fetche him dukes and lordes and knightes,
That marryed the might bee.

26 They had not ridden scant a myle,
A myle forthe of the towne,
But in did come the kyng of Spayne,
With kempës[3] many one.

27 But in did come the kyng of Spayne,
With manye a bold barone,
Tone day to marrye Kyng Adlands daughter,
Tother daye to carrye her home.

28 Shee sent one after Kyng Estmere,
In all the spede might bee,
That he must either turne againe and fighte,
Or goe home and loose his ladye.

29 One whyle then the page he went,
Another while he ranne;
Till he had oretaken King Estmere,
I-wis he never blanne.[4]

[1] said him nay. [2] Mahomet. [3] champions. [4] stopped.

30 'Tydings, tydings, Kyng Estmere!'
'What tydings nowe, my boye?'
'O tydinges I can tell to you,
That will you sore annoye.

31 'You had not ridden scant a mile,
A mile out of the towne,
But in did come the kyng of Spayne,
With kempës many a one.

32 'But in did come the kyng of Spayne,
With manye a bold barone,
Tone daye to marrye King Adlands daughter,
Tother daye to carry her home.

33 'My ladye fayre she greetes you well,
And ever-more well by mee;
You must either turne againe and fighte,
Or goe home and loose your ladye.'

34 Saies, 'Reade me, reade me, deere brother,
My reade shall ryse at thee,[1]
Whether it is better to turne and fighte,
Or goe home and loose my ladye.'

35 'Now hearken to me,' sayes Adler Yonge,
'And your reade must rise at me;
I quicklye will devise a waye
To sette thy ladye free.

36 'My mother was a westerne woman,
And learned in gramarye,[2]
And when I learned at the schole,
Something shee taught itt mee.

37 'There growes an hearbe within this field,
And iff it were but knowne,
His color, which is whyte and redd,
It will make blacke and browne.

38 'His color, which is browne and blacke,
Itt will make redd and whyte;
That sworde is not in all Englande
Upon his coate will byte.

39 'And you shal be a harper, brother,
Out of the north countrye,
And Ile be your boy, soe faine of fighte,
And beare your harpe by your knee.

40 'And you shal be the best harper
That ever tooke harpe in hand,
And I wil be the best singer
That ever sung in this lande.

41 'Itt shal be written in our forheads,
All and in grammarye,
That we towe are the boldest men
That are in all Christentye.'

42 And thus they renisht them to ryde,
Of tow good renisht steedes,
And when they came to King Adlands hall,
Of redd gold shone their weedes.

43 And whan the came to Kyng Adlands hall
Until the fayre hall-yate,
There they found a proud porter,
Rearing himselfe thereatt.

44 Sayes, 'Christ thee save, thou proud porter,'
Sayes, 'Christ thee save and see:'
'Nowe you be welcome,' sayd the porter,
'Of what land soever ye bee.'

45 'Wee beene harpers,' sayd Adler Younge,
'Come out of the northe countrye;
Wee beene come hither untill this place
This proud weddinge for to see.'

46 Sayd, 'And your color were white and redd,
As it is blacke and browne,
I wold saye King Estmere and his brother
Were comen untill this towne.'

47 Then they pulled out a ryng of gold,
Layd itt on the porters arme:
'And [3] ever we will thee,[4] proud porter,
Thou wilt saye us no harme.'

48 Sore he looked on Kyng Estmere,
And sore he handled the ryng,
Then opened to them the fayre hall-yates,
He lett [5] for no kind of thyng.

49 Kyng Estmere he stabled his steede
Soe fayre att the hall-bord;
The froth that came from his brydle bitte
Light in Kyng Bremors beard.

50 Saies, 'Stable thy steed, thou proud harper,'
Saies, 'Stable him in the stalle;

1 My counsel shall come from you. 2 magic.
1 f. 4 thrive. 5 delayed.

It doth not beseeme a proud harper
To stable his steede in a kyngs halle.'

51 'My ladde he is so lither,'[1] he said,
'He will doe nought that 's meete;
And is there any man in this hall
Were able him to beate?'

52 'Thou speakst proud words,' sayes the king of Spaine,
'Thou harper, here to mee;
There is a man within this halle
Will beate thy ladd and thee.'

53 'O let that man come downe,' he said,
'A sight of him wold I see;
And when hee hath beaten well my ladd,
Then he shall beate of mee.'

54 Downe then came the kemperye[2] man,
And looked him in the eare;
For all the gold that was under heaven,
He durst not neigh[3] him neare.

55 'And how nowe, kempe,' said the kynge of Spaine,
'And how, what aileth thee?'
He saies, 'It is writt in his forhead,
All and in gramarye,
That for all the gold that is under heaven,
I dare not neigh him nye.'

56 Then Kyng Estmere pulld forth his harpe,
And plaid a pretty thinge;
The ladye upstart from the borde,
And wold have gone from the king.

57 'Stay thy harpe, thou proud harper,
For Gods love I pray thee;
For and thou playes as thou beginns,
Thou'lt till[4] my bryde from mee.'

58 He stroake upon his harpe againe,
And playd a pretty thinge;
The ladye lough a loud laughter,
As shee sate by the king.

59 Saies, 'Sell me thy harpe, thou proud harper,
And thy stringës all;
For as many gold nobles thou shalt have,
As heere bee ringes in the hall.'

60 'What wold ye doe with my harpe,' he sayd,
'If I did sell itt yee?'
'To playe my wiffe and me a fitt,
When abed together wee bee.'

61 'Now sell me,' quoth hee, 'thy bryde soe gay,
As shee sitts by thy knee;
And as many gold nobles I will give
As leaves been on a tree.'

62 'And what wold ye doe with my bryde soe gay,
Iff I did sell her thee?
More seemelye it is for her fayre bodye
To lye by mee then thee.'

63 Hee played agayne both loud and shrille,
And Adler he did syng,
'O ladye, this is thy owne true love,
Noe harper, but a kyng.

64 'O ladye, this is thy owne true love,
As playnlye thou mayest see,
And Ile rid thee of that foul paynim
Who partes thy love and thee.'

65 The ladye looked, the ladye blushte,
And blushte and lookt agayne,
While Adler he hath drawne his brande,
And hath the sowdan slayne.

66 Up then rose the kemperye men,
And loud they gan to crye:
'Ah! traytors, yee have slayne our kyng,
And therefore yee shall dye.'

67 Kyng Estmere threwe the harpe asyde,
And swith[5] he drew his brand,
And Estmere he and Adler Yonge
Right stiffe in stour[6] can stand.

68 And aye their swordes soe sore can byte,
Throughe help of gramarye,
That soone they have slayne the kempery men,
Or forst them forth to flee.

69 Kyng Estmere tooke that fayre ladye,
And marryed her to his wiffe,
And brought her home to mery England,
With her to lead his life.

[1] rascally. [2] fighting.
[3] nigh, approach. [4] toll, entice.
[5] quickly. [6] bold in battle.

FAIR ANNIE[1]

1 'It 's narrow, narrow, make your bed,
And learn to lie your lane;[2]
For I 'm ga'n oer the sea, Fair Annie,
A braw bride to bring hame.
Wi her I will get gowd and gear;
Wi you I neer got nane.

2 'But wha will bake my bridal bread,
Or brew my bridal ale?
And wha will welcome my brisk bride,
That I bring oer the dale?'

3 'It 's I will bake your bridal bread,
And brew your bridal ale,
And I will welcome your brisk bride,
That you bring oer the dale.'

4 'But she that welcomes my brisk bride
Maun gang like maiden fair;
She maun lace on her robe sae jimp,[3]
And braid her yellow hair.'

5 'But how can I gang maiden-like,
When maiden I am nane?
Have I not born seven sons to thee,
And am with child again?'

6 She 's taen her young son in her arms,
Another in her hand,
And she 's up to the highest tower,
To see him come to land.

7 'Come up, come up, my eldest son,
And look oer yon sea-strand,
And see your father's new-come bride,
Before she come to land.'

8 'Come down, come down, my mother dear,
Come frae the castle wa!
I fear, if langer ye stand there,
Ye 'll let yoursell down fa.'

9 And she gaed down, and farther down,
Her love's ship for to see,
And the topmast and the mainmast
Shone like the silver free.

10 And she 's gane down, and farther down,
The bride's ship to behold,
And the topmast and the mainmast
They shone just like the gold.

11 She 's taen her seven sons in her hand,
I wot she didna fail;
She met Lord Thomas and his bride,
As they came oer the dale.

12 'You 're welcome to your house, Lord Thomas,
You 're welcome to your land;
You 're welcome with your fair ladye,
That you lead by the hand.

13 'You 're welcome to your ha's, ladye,
You 're welcome to your bowers;
You 're welcome to your hame, ladye,
For a' that 's here is yours.'

14 'I thank thee, Annie; I thank thee, Annie,
Sae dearly as I thank thee;
You 're the likest to my sister Annie,
That ever I did see.

15 'There came a knight out oer the sea,
And steald my sister away;
The shame scoup[4] in his company,
And land whereer he gae!'

16 She hang ae napkin at the door,
Another in the ha,
And a' to wipe the trickling tears,
Sae fast as they did fa.

17 And aye she served the lang tables,
With white bread and with wine,
And aye she drank the wan water,
To had[5] her colour fine.

18 And aye she served the lang tables,
With white bread and with brown;
And ay she turned her round about,
Sae fast the tears fall down.

19 And he 's taen down the silk napkin,
Hung on a silver pin,
And aye he wipes the tear trickling
A' down her cheik and chin.

20 And aye he turn'd him round about,
And smil'd amang his men;
Says, 'Like ye best the old ladye,
Or her that 's new come hame?'

[1] The twelfth century *Lai le Fraisne* (*Lay of the Ash-Tree*) of Marie de France is a version of this ancient tale: it may be found translated in Eugene Mason's *French Mediæval Romances*, in *Everyman's Library*.
[2] alone. [3] close-fitting. [4] fly. [5] hold, maintain.

21 When bells were rung, and mass was sung,
And a' men bound to bed,
Lord Thomas and his new-come bride
To their chamber they were gaed.

22 Annie made her bed a little forbye,[1]
To hear what they might say;
'And ever alas!' Fair Annie cried,
'That I should see this day!

23 'Gin my seven sons were seven young rats,
Running on the castle wa,
And I were a grey cat mysell,
I soon would worry them a'.

24 'Gin my seven sons were seven young hares,
Running oer yon lilly lee,
And I were a grew hound[2] mysell,
Soon worried they a' should be.'

25 And wae and sad Fair Annie sat,
And drearie was her sang,
And ever, as she sobbd and grat,[3]
'Wae to the man that did the wrang!'

26 'My gown is on,' said the new-come bride,
'My shoes are on my feet,
And I will to Fair Annie's chamber,
And see what gars[4] her greet.

27 'What ails ye, what ails ye, Fair Annie,
That ye make sic a moan?
Has your wine barrels cast the girds,[5]
Or is your white bread gone?

28 'O wha was 't was your father, Annie,
Or wha was 't was your mother?
And had ye ony sister, Annie,
Or had ye ony brother?'

29 'The Earl of Wemyss was my father,
The Countess of Wemyss my mother;
And a' the folk about the house
To me were sister and brother.'

30 'If the Earl of Wemyss was your father,
I wot sae was he mine;
And it shall not be for lack o gowd
That ye your love sall tine.[6]

31 'For I have seven ships o mine ain,
A' loaded to the brim,
And I will gie them a' to thee,
Wi four to thine eldest son:
But thanks to a' the powers in heaven
That I gae maiden hame!'

[1] nearby. [2] greyhound. [3] wept.
[4] makes. [5] hoops. [6] lose.

CHILD WATERS

1 Childe Watters in his stable stoode,
And stroaket his milke-white steede;
To him came a ffaire young ladye
As ere did weare womans wee[de].

2 Saies, 'Christ you save, good Chyld Waters!'
Sayes, 'Christ you save and see!
My girdle of gold, which was too longe,
Is now to short ffor mee.

3 'And all is with one chyld of yours,
I ffeele sturre att my side;
My gowne of greene, it is to strayght;[7]
Before it was to wide.'

4 'If the child be mine, Faire Ellen,' he sayd,
'Be mine, as you tell mee,
Take you Cheshire and Lancashire both,
Take them your owne to bee.

5 'If the child be mine, Ffaire Ellen,' he said,
'Be mine, as you doe sweare,
Take you Cheshire and Lancashire both,
And make *that* child your heyre.'

6 Shee saies, 'I had rather have one kisse,
Child Waters, of thy mouth,
Then I wold have Cheshire and Lancashire both,
That lyes by north and south.

7 'And I had rather have a twinkling,
Child Waters, of your eye,
Then I wold have Cheshire and Lancashire both,
To take them mine oune to bee.

8 'To-morrow, Ellen, I must forth ryde
Soe ffarr into the north countrye;
The ffairest lady *that* I can ffind,
Ellen, must goe with mee.'

[7] narrow.

'And ever I pray you, Child Watters,
Your ffootpage let me bee!'

9 'If you will my ffootpage be, Ellen,
As you doe tell itt mee,
Then you must cutt your gownne of greene
An inche above your knee.

10 'Soe must you doe your yellow lockes,
Another inch above your eye;
You must tell noe man what is my name;
My ffootpage then you shall bee.'

11 All this long day Child Waters rode,
Shee ran bare ffoote by his side;
Yett was he never soe curteous a knight
To say, 'Ellen, will you ryde?'

12 But all this day Child Waters rode,
Shee ran barffoote thorow the broome;
Yett he was never soe curteous a knight
As to say, 'Put on your shoone.'

13 'Ride softlye,' shee said, 'Child Waters;
Why doe you ryde soe ffast?
The child which is no mans but yours
My bodye itt will burst.'

14 He sayes, 'Sees thou yonder water, Ellen,
That fflowes from banke to brim?'
'I trust to God, Child Waters,' shee said,
'You will never see mee swime.'

15 But when shee came to the waters side,
Shee sayled to the chinne:
'Except the lord of heaven be my speed,
Now must I learne to swime.'

16 The salt waters bare vp Ellens clothes,
Our Ladye bare vp he[r] chinne,
And Child Waters was a woe man, good Lord,
To ssee Faire Ellen swime.

17 And when shee over the water was,
Shee then came to his knee:
He said, 'Come hither, Ffaire Ellen,
Loe yonder what I see!

18 'Seest thou not yonder hall, Ellen?
Of redd gold shine the yates;
There 's four and twenty ffayre ladyes,
The ffairest is my wordlye make.[1]

19 'Seest thou not yonder hall, Ellen?
Of redd gold shineth the tower;
There is four and twenty ffaire ladyes,
The fairest is my paramoure.'

20 'I doe see the hall now, Child Waters,
That of redd gold shineth the yates;
God give good then of your selfe,
And of your wordlye make!

21 'I doe see the hall now, Child Waters,
That of redd gold shineth the tower;
God give good then of your selfe,
And of your paramoure!'

22 There were four and twenty ladyes,
Were playing att the ball,
And Ellen, was the ffairest ladye,
Must bring his steed to the stall.

23 There were four and twenty faire ladyes
Was playing att the chesse;
And Ellen, shee was the ffairest ladye,
Must bring his horsse to grasse.

24 And then bespake Child Waters sister,
And these were the words said shee:
You have the prettyest ffootpage, brother,
That ever I saw with mine eye;

25 'But that his belly it is soe bigg,
His girdle goes wonderous hye;
And euer I pray you, Child Waters,
Let him goe into the chamber with mee.'

26 'It is more meete for a little ffootpage,
That has run through mosse and mire,
To take his supper vpon his knee
And sitt downe by the kitchin fyer,
Then to goe into the chamber with any ladye
That weares soe [rich] attyre.'

27 But when they had supped euery one,
To bedd they took the way;
He sayd, 'Come hither, my little footpage,
Hearken what I doe say.

[1] worldly mate.

28 'And goe thee downe into yonder towne,
And low into the street;
The ffairest ladye *that* thou can find,
Hyer her in mine armes to sleepe,
And take her up in thine armes two,
For filinge[1] of her ffeete.'

29 Ellen is gone into the towne,
And low into the streete;
The fairest ladye *that* shee cold find
Shee hyred in his armes to sleepe,
And tooke her in her armes two,
For filing of her ffeete.

30 'I pray you now, good Child Waters,
That I may creepe in att your bedds ffeete;
For there is noe place about this house
Where I may say[2] a sleepe.'

31 This [night] and itt drove on affterward
Till itt was neere the day:
He sayd, 'Rise vp, my little ffoote-page,
And give my steed corne and hay;
And soe doe thou the good blacke oates,
That he may carry me the better away.'

32 And up then rose Ffaire Ellen,
And gave his steed corne and hay,
And soe shee did and the good blacke oates,
That he might carry him the better away.

33 Shee layned[3] her backe to the manger side,
And greivouslye did groane;
And *that* beheard his mother deere,
And heard her make her moane.

34 Shee said, 'Rise vp, thou Child Waters,
I thinke thou art a cursed man;
For yonder is a ghost in thy stable,
That greivouslye doth groane,
Or else some woman laboures of child,
Shee is soe woe begone.'

35 But vp then rose Child Waters,
And did on his shirt of silke;
Then he put on his other clothes
On his body as white as milke.

[1] defiling. [2] assay. [3] leaned.

36 And when he came to the stable-dore,
Full still *that* hee did stand,
That hee might heare now Faire Ellen,
How shee made her monand.[4]

37 Shee said, 'Lullabye, my owne deere child!
Lullabye, deere child, deere!
I wold thy father were a king,
Thy mother layd on a beere!'

38 'Peace now,' he said, 'good Faire Ellen,
And be of good cheere, I thee pray,
And the bridall and the churching both,
They shall bee upon one day.'

LADY MAISRY

1 The young lords o the north country
Have all a wooing gone,
To win the love of Lady Maisry,
But o them she woud hae none.

2 O they hae courted Lady Maisry
Wi a' kin kind of things;[5]
An they hae sought her Lady Maisry
Wi brotches an wi rings.

3 An they ha sought her Lady Maisry
Frae father and frae mother;
An they ha sought her Lady Maisry
Frae sister an frae brother.

4 An they ha followd her Lady Maisry
Thro chamber and thro ha;
But a' that they coud say to her,
Her answer still was Na.

5 'O had[6] your tongues, young men,' she says,
'An think nae mair o me;
For I've gien my love to an English lord,
An think nae mair o me.'

6 Her father's kitchy-boy heard that,
An ill death may he dee!
An he is on to her brother,
As fast as gang coud he.

7 'O is my father an my mother well,
But an my brothers three?
Gin my sister Lady Maisry be well,
There 's naething can ail me.'

[4] moaning.
[5] things of every conceivable kind. [6] hold.

8 'Your father and your mother is well,
But an your brothers three;
Your sister Lady Maisry 's well,
So big wi bairn gangs she.'

9 'Gin this be true you tell to me,
My mailison[1] light on thee!
But gin it be a lie you tell,
You sal be hangit hie.'

10 He 's done him to his sister's bowr,
Wi meikle doole an care;
An there he saw her Lady Maisry,
Kembing her yallow hair.

11 'O wha is aught[2] that bairn,' he says,
'That ye sae big are wi?
And gin ye winna own the truth,
This moment ye sall dee.'

12 She turnd her right an roun about,
An the kem fell frae her han;
A trembling seizd her fair body,
An her rosy cheek grew wan.

13 'O pardon me, my brother dear,
An the truth I 'll tell to thee;
My bairn it is to Lord William,
An he is betrothed to me.'

14 'O coud na ye gotten dukes, or lords,
Intill your ain country,
That ye draw up wi an English dog,
To bring this shame on me?

15 'But ye maun gi up the English lord,
Whan youre young babe is born;
For, gin you keep by him an hour langer,
Your life sall be forlorn.'

16 'I will gi up this English blood,
Till my young babe be born;
But the never a day nor hour langer,
Tho my life should be forlorn.'

17 'O whare is a' my merry young men,
Whom I gi meat and fee,
To pu the thistle and the thorn,
To burn this wile[3] whore wi?'

18 'O whare will I get a bonny boy,
To help me in my need,
To rin wi hast to Lord William,
And bid him come wi speed?'

1 curse. 2 who is it owns. 3 vile.

19 O out it spake a bonny boy,
Stood by her brother's side:
'O I would rin your errand, lady,
Oer a' the world wide.

20 'Aft have I run your errands, lady,
Whan blawn baith win and weet;[4]
But now I 'll rin your errand, lady,
Wi sat[5] tears on my cheek.'

21 O whan he came to broken briggs,[6]
He bent his bow and swam,
An whan he came to the green grass growin,
He slackd his shoone and ran.

22 O whan he came to Lord William's gates,
He baed na to chap or ca,[7]
But set his bent bow till his breast,
An lightly lap the wa;[8]
An, or the porter was at the gate,
The boy was i the ha.

23 'O is my biggins[9] broken, boy?
Or is my towers won?
Or is my lady lighter yet,
Of a dear daughter or son?'

24 'Your biggin is na broken, sir,
Nor is your towers won;
But the fairest lady in a' the lan
For you this day maun burn.'

25 'O saddle me the black, the black,
Or saddle me the brown;
O saddle me the swiftest steed
That ever rade frae a town.'

26 Or he was near a mile awa,
She heard his wild horse sneeze:
'Mend up the fire, my false brother,
It 's na come to my knees.'

27 O whan he lighted at the gate,
She heard his bridle ring:
'Mend up the fire, my false brother,
It 's far yet frae my chin.

28 'Mend up the fire to me, brother,
Mend up the fire to me;
For I see him comin hard an fast
Will soon men 't up to thee.

4 blowing both wind and wet. 5 salt. 6 bridges.
7 bided not to rap or call. 8 leaped the wall. 9 buildings.

29 'O gin my hands had been loose, Willy,
Sae hard as they are boun,
I would have turnd me frae the gleed,[1]
And castin out your young son.'

30 'O I 'll gar burn for you, Maisry,
Your father an your mother;
An I 'll gar burn for you, Maisry,
Your sister an your brother.

31 'An I 'll gar burn for you, Maisry,
The chief of a' your kin;
An the last bonfire that I come to,
Mysel I will cast in.'

GLASGERION[2]

1 Glasgerion was a kings owne sonne,
And a harper he was good;
He harped in the kings chamber,
Where cuppe and candle stoode,
And soe did hee in the queens chamber,
Till ladies waxed wood.[3]

2 And then bespake the *kings* daughter,
And these words thus sayd shee.
. . . . . .
. . . . . .

3 Saide, 'Strike on, strike on, Glasgerrion,
Of thy striking doe not blinne;[4]
There 's never a stroke comes over thin harpe
But it glads my hart within.'

4 'Faire might you fall, lady!' quoth hee;
'Who taught you now to speake.
I have loved you, lady, seven yeere;
My hart I durst neere breake.'

5 'But come to my bower, my Glasgerryon,
When all men are att rest;
As I am a ladie true of my promise,
Thou shalt bee a welcome guest.'

6 But hom then came Glasgerryon,
A glad man, Lord, was hee:
'And come thou hither, Iacke, my boy,
Come hither unto mee.

7 'For the *kings* daughter of Normandye,
Her love is granted mee,
And beffore the cocke have crowen,
Att her chamber must I bee.'

8 'But come you hither, *master*,' quoth hee,
'Lay your head downe on this stone;
For I will waken you, *master* deere,
Afore it be time to gone.'

9 But upp then rose *that* lither[5] ladd,
And did on hose and shoone;
A coller he cast upon his necke,
Hee seemed a gentleman.

10 And when he came to *that* ladies chamber,
He thrild vpon a pinn;[6]
The lady was true of her promise,
Rose up and lett him in.

11 He did not take the lady gay
To boulster nor to bedd,
But downe upon her chamber-flore
Full soone he hath her layd.

12 He did not kisse *that* lady gay
When he came nor when he youd;[7]
And sore mistrusted that lady gay
He was of some churlës blood.

13 But home then came *that* lither ladd,
And did of his hose and shoone,
And cast *that* coller from about his necke;
He was but a churlës sonne:
'Awaken,' quoth hee, 'my *master* deere,
I hold it time to be gone.

14 'For I have sadled your horsse, *master*,
Well bridled I have your steed;
Have not I served a good breakfast,
When time comes I have need.'

15 But up then rose good Glasgerryon,
And did on both hose and shoone,
And cast a coller about his necke;
He was a *kingës* sonne.

16 And when he came to *that* la*dies* chamber,
He thrild vpon a pinn;
The la*dy* was more then true of promise,
Rose up and let him in.

[1] brand.
[2] It is an interesting circumstance that one of the great harpers mentioned by Chaucer in his *House of Fame* (III, 118) is the "Bret," or British, Glascurion.
[3] frantic. [4] cease.
[5] wicked. [6] rattled at the door-fastening. [7] went.

17 Saies, 'Whether have you left with me
Your braclett or your glove?
Or are you returned backe againe
To know more of my love?'

18 Glasgerryon swore a full great othe,
By oake and ashe and thorne,
'Lady, I was never in your chamber
Sith the time that I was borne.'

19 'O then it was your litle foote-page
Falsly hath beguiled me:'
And then shee pulld forth a litle penkniffe,
That hanged by her knee,
Says, 'There shall never noe churlës blood
Spring within my body.'

20 But home then went Glasgerryon,
A woe man, good [Lord], was hee;
'Sayes, 'Come hither, thou Iacke, my boy,
Come thou hither to me.

21 'Ffor if I had killed a man to-night,
Iacke, I wold tell it thee;
But if I have not killed a man to-night,
Iacke, thou hast killed three!'

22 And he puld out his bright browne sword,
And dryed it on his sleeve,
And he smote off that lither ladds head,
And asked noe man noe leave.

23 He sett the swords poynt till his brest,
The pumill till a stone;
Thorrow[1] *that* falsenese of *that* lither ladd
These three lives werne all gone.

CLERK SAUNDERS

1 Clark Sanders and May Margret
Walkt ower yon graveld green,
And sad and heavy was the love,
I wat, it fell this twa between.

2 'A bed, a bed,' Clark Sanders said,
'A bed, a bed for you and I;'
'Fye no, fye no,' the lady said,
'Until the day we married be.

3 'For in it will come my seven brothers,
And a' their torches burning bright;
They 'll say, "We hae but ae sister,
And here her lying wi a knight."'

4 'Ye 'l take the sourde fray my scabbord,
And lowly, lowly lift the gin,
And you may say, your oth to save,
You never let Clark Sanders in.

5 'Yele take a napken in your hand,
And ye 'l ty up baith your een,
An ye may say, your oth to save,
That ye saw na Sandy sen late yestreen.

6 'Yele take me in your armes twa,
Yele carrey me ben[2] into your bed,
And ye may say, your oth to save,
In your bower-floor I never tread.'

7 She has taen the sourde fray his scabbord,
And lowly, lowly lifted the gin;
She was to swear, her oth to save,
She never let Clerk Sanders in.

8 She has tain a napkin in her hand,
And she ty'd up baith her eeen;
She was to swear, her oth to save,
She saw na him sene late yestreen.

9 She has taen him in her armes twa,
And carried him ben into her bed;
She was to swear, her oth to save,
He never in her bower-floor tread.

10 In and came her seven brothers,
And all their torches burning bright;
Says thay, 'We hae but ae sister,
And see there her lying wi a knight.'

11 Out and speaks the first of them,
'A wat[3] they hay been lovers dear;'
Out and speaks the next of them,
'They hay been in love this many a year.'

12 Out an speaks the third of them,
'It wear great sin this twa to twain;'[4]
Out an speaks the fourth of them,
'It wear a sin to kill a sleeping man.'

[1] Through.
[2] within. [3] I ween. [4] sunder.

13 Out an speaks the fifth of them,
'A wat they 'll near be twained by me;'
Out an speaks the sixt of them,
'We 'l tak our leave an gae our way.'

14 Out an speaks the seventh of them,
'Altho there wear no a man but me,
. . . . . .
I bear the brand, I 'le gar him die.'

15 Out he has taen a bright long brand,
And he has striped it throw the straw,
And throw and throw Clarke Sanders' body
A wat he has gard[1] cold iron gae.

16 Sanders he started, an Margret she lapt,
Intill his arms whare she lay,
And well and wellsom was the night,
A wat it was between these twa.

17 And they lay still, and sleeped sound,
Untill the day began to daw;[2]
And kindly till him she did say
'It 's time, trew-love, ye wear awa.'

18 They lay still, and sleeped sound,
Until the sun began to shine;
She lookt between her and the wa,
And dull and heavy was his eeen.

19 She thought it had been a loathsome sweat,
A wat it had fallen this twa between;
But it was the blood of his fair body,
A wat his life days wair na lang.

20 'O Sanders, I 'le do for your sake
What other ladys would na thoule;[3]
When seven years is come and gone,
There 's near a shoe go on my sole.

21 'O Sanders, I 'le do for your sake
What other ladies would think mare;
When seven years is come an gone,
Ther 's nere a comb go in my hair.

22 'O Sanders, I 'le do for your sake
What other ladies would think lack;
When seven years is come an gone,
I 'le wear nought but dowy[4] black.'

[1] I wot he has made. [2] dawn.
[3] endure. [4] dismal.

23 The bells gaed clinking throw the towne,
To carry the dead corps to the clay,
An sighing says her May Margret,
'A wat I bide a doulfou day.'

24 In an come her father dear,
Stout steping on the floor;
. . . . . .
. . . . . .

25 'Hold your toung, my doughter dear,
Let all your mourning a bee;
I 'le carry the dead corpse to the clay,
An I 'le come back an comfort thee.'

26 'Comfort well your seven sons,
For comforted will I never bee;
For it was neither lord nor loune
That was in bower last night wi mee.'

LORD THOMAS AND FAIR ANNET

1 Lord Thomas and Fair Annet
Sate a' day on a hill;
Whan night was cum, and sun was sett,
They had not talkt their fill.

2 Lord Thomas said a word in jest,
Fair Annet took it ill:
'A, I will nevir wed a wife.
Against my ain friends' will.'

3 'Gif ye wull nevir wed a wife,
A wife wull neir wed yee:'
Sae he is hame to tell his mither,
And knelt upon his knee.

4 'O rede, O rede, mither,' he says,
'A gude rede[5] gie to mee;
O sall I tak the nut-browne bride,
And let Faire Annet bee?'

5 'The nut-browne bride haes gowd and gear,
Fair Annet she has gat nane;
And the little beauty Fair Annet haes
O it wull soon be gane.'

6 And he has till his brother gane:
'Now, brother, rede ye mee;
A, sall I marrie the nut-browne bride,
And let Fair Annet bee?'

[5] counsel.

7 'The nut-browne bride has oxen, brother,
The nut-browne bride has kye ;[1]
I wad hae ye marrie the nut-browne bride,
And cast Fair Annet bye.'

8 'Her oxen may dye i the house, billie,
And her kye into the byre,[2]
And I sall hae nothing to mysell
Bot a fat fadge[3] by the fyre.'

9 And he has till his sister gane:
'Now, sister, rede ye mee;
O sall I marrie the nut-browne bride,
And set Fair Annet free?'

10 'I 'se rede ye tak Fair Annet, Thomas,
And let the browne bride alane;
Lest ye sould sigh, and say, "Alace,
What is this we brought hame!"'

11 'No, I will tak my mither's counsel,
And marrie me owt o hand;
And I will tak the nut-browne bride,
Fair Annet may leive the land.'

12 Up then rose Fair Annet's father,
Twa hours or it wer day,
And he is gane into the bower
Wherein Fair Annet lay.

13 'Rise up, rise up, Fair Annet,' he says,
'Put on your silken sheene;[4]
Let us gae to St. Marie's kirke,
And see that rich weddeen.'

14 'My maides, gae to my dressing-roome,
And dress to me my hair;
Whaireir yee laid a plait before,
See yee lay ten times mair.

15 'My maids, gae to my dressing-room,
And dress to me my smock;
The one half is o the holland[5] fine,
The other o needle-work.'

16 The horse Fair Annet rade upon,
He amblit like the wind;
Wi siller he was shod before,
Wi burning gowd behind.

17 Four and twanty siller bells
Wer a' tyed till his mane,
And yae tift[6] o the norland wind,
They tinkled ane by ane.

18 Four and twanty gay gude knichts
Rade by Fair Annet's side,
And four and twanty fair ladies,
As gin she had bin a bride.

19 And whan she cam to Marie's kirk,
She sat on Marie's stean:[7]
The cleading[8] that Fair Annet had on
It skinkled[9] in their een.

20 And whan she cam into the kirk,
She shimmerd like the sun;
The belt that was about her waist
Was a' wi pearles bedone.

21 She sat her by the nut-browne bride,
And her een they wer sae clear,
Lord Thomas he clean forgat the bride,
Whan Fair Annet drew near.

22 He had a rose into his hand,
He gae it kisses three,
And reaching by the nut-browne bride,
Laid it on Fair Annet's knee.

23 Up than spak the nut-browne bride,
She spak wi meikle spite:
'And whair gat ye that rose-water,
That does mak yee sae white?'

24 'O I did get the rose-water
Whair ye wull neir get nane,
For I did get that very rose-water
Into my mither's wame.'[10]

25 The bride she drew a long bodkin
Frae out her gay head-gear,
And strake Fair Annet unto the heart,
That word spak nevir mair.

26 Lord Thomas he saw Fair Annet wex pale,
And marvelit what mote bee;
But whan he saw her dear heart's blude,
A' wood-wroth[11] wexed hee.

27 He drew his dagger, that was sae sharp,
That was sae sharp and meet,
And drave it into the nut-browne bride,
That fell deid at his feit.

[1] kine. [2] cow-shed. [3] dumpy woman.
[4] splendor. [5] linen.
[6] one gust. [7] stone. [8] clothing.
[9] shone. [10] womb. [11] mad-angry.

28 'Now stay for me, dear Annet,' he sed,
'Now stay, my dear,' he cry'd;
Then strake the dagger untill his heart,
And fell deid by her side.

29 Lord Thomas was buried without kirkwa,
Fair Annet within the quiere,
And o the tane thair grew a birk,[1]
The other a bonny briere.

30 And ay they grew, and ay they threw,[2]
As they wad faine be neare;
And by this ye may ken right weil
They were twa luvers deare.

LOVE GREGOR[3]

1 'O WHA will shoe my fu fair foot?
And wha will glove my hand?
And wha will lace my middle jimp,[4]
Wi the new made London band?

2 'And wha will kaim my yellow hair,
Wi the new made silver kaim?
And wha will father my young son,
Till Love Gregor come hame?'

3 'Your father will shoe your fu fair foot,
Your mother will glove your hand;
Your sister will lace your middle jimp
Wi the new made London band.

4 'Your brother will kaim your yellow hair,
Wi the new made silver kaim;
And the king of heaven will father your bairn,
Till Love Gregor come haim.'

5 'But I will get a bonny boat,
And I will sail the sea,
For I maun gang to Love Gregor,
Since he canno come hame to me.'

6 O she has gotten a bonny boat,
And saillđ the sa't sea fame;
She langd to see her ain true-love,
Since he could no come hame.

7 'O row your boat, my mariners,
And bring me to the land,
For yonder I see my love's castle,
Closs by the sa't sea strand.'

8 She has taen her young son in her arms,
And to the door she 's gone,
And lang she 's knocked and sair she ca'd,
But answer got she none.

9 'O open the door, Love Gregor,' she says,
'O open, and let me in;
For the win blaws thro my yellow hair,
And the rain draps oer my chin.'

10 'Awa, awa, ye ill woman,
You 'r nae come here for good;
You 'r but some witch, or wile warlock,[5]
Or mer-maid of the flood.'

11 'I am neither a witch nor a wile warlock,
Nor mer-maid of the sea,
I am Fair Annie of Rough Royal;
O open the door to me.'

12 'Gin ye be Annie of Rough Royal—
And I trust ye are not she—
Now tell me some of the love-tokens
That past between you and me.'

13 'O dinna you mind now, Love Gregor,
When we sat at the wine,
How we changed the rings frae our fingers?
And I can show thee thine.

14 'O yours was good, and good enneugh,
But ay the best was mine;
For yours was o the good red goud,
But mine o the diamonds fine.

15 'But open the door now, Love Gregor,
Open the door I pray,
For your young son that is in my arms
Will be dead ere it be day.'

16 'Awa, awa, ye ill woman,
For here ye shanno win in;
Gae drown ye in the raging sea,
Or hang on the gallows-pin.'

17 When the cock had crawn, and day did dawn,
And the sun began to peep,
Then it raise him Love Gregor,
And sair, sair did he weep.

[1] birch. [2] twisted.
[3] Also known as *The Lass of Roch Royal*. [4] small. [5] wizard.

18 'O I dreamd a dream, my mother dear,
The thoughts o it gars me greet,[1]
That Fair Annie of Rough Royal
Lay cauld dead at my feet.'

19 'Gin it be for Annie of Rough Royal
That ye make a' this din,
She stood a' last night at this door,
But I trow she wan no in.'

20 'O wae betide ye, ill woman,
An ill dead may ye die!
That ye woudno open the door to her,
Nor yet woud waken me.'

21 O he has gone down to yon shore-side,
As fast as he could fare;
He saw Fair Annie in her boat,
But the wind it tossed her sair.

22 And 'Hey, Annie!' and 'How, Annie!
O Annie, winna ye bide?'
But aye the mair that he cried Annie,
The braider grew the tide.

23 And 'Hey, Annie!' and 'How, Annie!
Dear Annie speak to me!'
But ay the louder he cried Annie,
The louder roard the sea.

24 The wind blew loud, the sea grew rough,
And dashd the boat on shore;
Fair Annie floats on the raging sea,
But her young son raise no more.

25 Love Gregor tare his yellow hair,
And made a heavy moan;
Fair Annie's corpse lay at his feet,
But his bonny young son was gone.

26 O cherry, cherry was her cheek,
And gowden was her hair,
But clay cold were her rosey lips,
Nae spark of life was there.

27 And first he 's kissd her cherry cheek,
And neist he 's kissed her chin;
And saftly pressed her rosey lips,
But there was nae breath within.

28 'O wae betide my cruel mother,
And an ill dead may she die!
For she turnd my true-love frae my door,
When she came sae far to me.'

[1] makes me cry.

SWEET WILLIAM'S GHOST

1 WHAN bells war rung, an mass was sung,
A wat a' man[2] to bed were gone,
Clark Sanders came to Margret's window,
With mony a sad sigh and groan.

2 'Are ye sleeping, Margret,' he says,
'Or are ye waking, presentlie?
Give me my faith and trouthe again,
A wat, trew-love, I gied to thee.'

3 'Your faith and trouth ye 's never get,
Nor our trew love shall never twain,[3]
Till ye come with me in my bower,
And kiss me both cheek and chin.'

4 'My mouth it is full cold, Margret,
It has the smell now of the ground;
And if I kiss thy comely mouth,
Thy life-days will not be long.

5 'Cocks are crowing a merry mid-larf,[4]
I wat the wild fule[5] boded day;
Gie me my faith and trouthe again,
And let me fare me on my way.'

6 'Thy faith and trouth thou shall na get,
Nor our trew love shall never twin,
Till ye tell me what comes of women
A wat that dy's in strong traveling.'

7 'Their beds are made in the heavens high,
Down at the foot of our good Lord's knee,
Well set about wi gilly-flowers,
A wat sweet company for to see.

8 'O cocks are crowing a merry middlarf,
A wat the wilde foule boded day;
The salms of Heaven will be sung,
And ere now I 'le be misst away.'

9 Up she has tain a bright long wand,
And she has straked[6] her trouth thereon;
She has given (it) him out at the shot-window,
Wi many a sad sigh and heavy groan.

[2] Surely all men. [3] part. [4] A doubtful word.
[5] fowl. [6] stroked, i.e., transferred it to the wand.

10 'I thank you, Margret, I thank you, Margret,
And I thank you hartilie;
Gine ever the dead come for the quick,
Be sure, Margret, I 'll come again for thee.'

11 It 's hose an shoon an gound [1] alane
She clame the wall and followed him,
Untill she came to a green forest,
On this she lost the sight of him.

12 'Is there any room at your head, Sanders?
Is there any room at your feet?
Or any room at your twa sides?
Whare fain, fain woud I sleep.'

13 'There is na room at my head, Margret,
There is na room at my feet;
There is room at my twa sides,
For ladys for to sleep.

14 'Cold meal [2] is my covering owre,
But an my winding sheet;
My bed it is full low, I say,
Down among the hongerey worms I sleep.

15 'Cold meal is my covering owre,
But an my winding sheet;
The dew it falls na sooner down
Than ay it is full weet.'

THE WIFE OF USHER'S WELL

1 There lived a wife at Usher's Well,
And a wealthy wife was she;
She had three stout and stalwart sons
And sent them oer the sea.

2 They hadna been a week from her,
A week but barely ane,
Whan word came to the carline wife [3]
That her three sons were gane.

3 They hadna been a week from her,
A week but barely three,
Whan word came to the carlin wife
That her sons she 'd never see.

4 'I wish the wind may never cease,
Nor fashes [4] in the flood,
Till my three sons come hame to me,
In earthly flesh and blood.'

5 It fell about the Martinmass,
When nights are lang and mirk,[5]
The carlin wife's three sons came hame,
And their hats were o the birk.[6]

6 It neither grew in syke [7] nor ditch,
Nor yet in ony sheugh [8];
But at the gates o Paradise,
That birk grew fair eneugh.

. . . . . .

7 'Blow up the fire, my maidens,
Bring water from the well;
For a' my house shall feast this night,
Since my three sons are well.'

8 And she has made to them a bed,
She 's made it large and wide,
And she 's taen her mantle her about,
Sat down at the bed-side.

. . . . . .

9 Up then crew the red, red cock,
And up and crew the gray;
The eldest to the youngest said,
''T is time we were away.'

10 The cock he hadna crawd but once,
And clappd his wings at a',
When the youngest to the eldest said,
'Brother, we must awa.

11 'The cock doth craw, the day doth daw,
The channerin [9] worm doth chide;
Gin ye be mist out o our place,
A sair pain we maun bide.

12 'Fare ye weel, my mother dear!
Fareweel to barn and byre [10]!
13 And fare ye weel, the bonny lass
That kindles my mother's fire!'

LITTLE MUSGRAVE AND LADY BARNARD

1 As it fell one holy-day,
Hay downe,
As many be in the yeare,
When young men and maids together did goe,
Their mattins and masse to heare,

[1] gown. [2] mould. [3] old woman. [4] troubles. [5] dark. [6] birch. [7] trench. [8] furrow. [9] grumbling. [10] cow-house.

2 Little Musgrave came to the church-dore;
The preist was at private masse;
But he had more minde of the faire women
Than he had of our lady['s] grace.

3 The one of them was clad in green,
Another was clad in pall,[1]
And then came in my Lord Bernard's wife,
The fairest amonst them all.

4 She cast an eye on Little Musgrave,
As bright as the summer sun;
And then bethought this Little Musgrave,
This lady's heart have I woonn.

5 Quoth she, 'I have loved thee, Little Musgrave,
Full long and many a day;'
'So have I loved you, fair lady,
Yet never word durst I say.'

6 'I have a bower at Buckelsfordbery,
Full daintyly it is deight;
If thou wilt wend thither, thou Little Musgrave,
Thou 's lig[2] in mine armes all night.'

7 Quoth he, 'I thank yee, faire lady,
This kindnes thou showest to me;
But whether it be to my weal or woe,
This night I will lig with thee.'

8 With that he heard, a little tynë page,
By his ladye's coach as he ran:
'All though I am my ladye's foot-page,
Yet I am Lord Barnard's man.

9 'My lord Barnard shall knowe of this,
Whether I sink or swim;'
And ever where the bridges were broake
He laid him downe to swimme.

10 'A sleepe or wake, thou Lord Barnard,
As thou art a man of life,
For Little Musgrave is at Bucklesfordbery,
A bed with thy own wedded wife.'

11 'If this be true, thou little tinny page,
This thing thou tellest to me,
Then all the land in Bucklesfordbery
I freely will give to thee.

12 'But if it be a ly, thou little tinny page,
This thing thou tellest to me,
On the hyest tree in Bucklesfordbery
Then hanged shalt thou be.'

13 He called up his merry men all:
'Come saddle me my steed;
This night must I to Buckellsfordbery,
For I never had greater need.'

14 And some of them whistld, and some of them sung,
And some these words did say,
And ever when my lord Barnard's horn blew,
'Away, Musgrave, away!'

15 'Methinks I hear the thresel-cock,
Methinks I hear the jaye;
Methinks I hear my lord Barnard,
And I would I were away.'

16 'Lye still, lye still, thou Little Musgrave,
And huggell me from the cold;
'T is nothing but a shephard's boy,
A driving his sheep to the fold.

17 'Is not thy hawke upon a perch?
Thy steed eats oats and hay;
And thou a fair lady in thine armes,
And wouldst thou bee away?'

18 With that my lord Barnard came to the dore,
And lit a stone upon;
He plucked out three silver keys,
And he opened the dores each one.

19 He lifted up the coverlett,
He lifted up the sheet:
'How now, how now, thou Littell Musgrave,
Doest thou find my lady sweet?'

20 'I find her sweet,' quoth Little Musgrave,
'The more 't is to my paine;
I would gladly give three hundred pounds
That I were on yonder plaine.'

21 'Arise, arise, thou Littell Musgrave,
And put thy clothës on;
It shall nere be said in my country
I have killed a naked man.

[1] purple. [2] Thou shalt lie.

22 'I have two swords in one scabberd,
Full deere they cost my purse;
And thou shalt have the best of them,
And I will have the worse.'

23 The first stroke that Little Musgrave stroke,
He hurt Lord Barnard sore;
The next stroke that Lord Barnard stroke,
Little Musgrave nere struck more.

24 With that bespake this faire lady,
In bed whereas she lay:
'Although thou 'rt dead, thou Little Musgrave,
Yet I for thee will pray.

25 'And wish well to thy soule will I,
So long as I have life;
So will I not for thee, Barnard,
Although I am thy wedded wife.'

26 He cut her paps from off her brest;
Great pity it was to see
That some drops of this ladie's heart's blood
Ran trickling downe her knee.

27 'Woe worth you, woe worth, my mery men all,
You were nere borne for my good;
Why did you not offer to stay my hand,
When you see me wax so wood?

28 'For I have slaine the bravest sir knight
That ever rode on steed;
So have I done the fairest lady
That ever did woman's deed.

29 'A grave, a grave,' Lord Barnard cryd,
'To put these lovers in;
But lay my lady on the upper hand,
For she came of the better kin.'

BONNY BARBARA ALLAN

1 It was in and about the Martinmas time,
When the green leaves were a falling,
That Sir John Græme, in the West Country,
Fell in love with Barbara Allan.

2 He sent his man down through the town,
To the place where she was dwelling:
'O haste and come to my master dear,
Gin ye be Barbara Allan.'

3 O hooly,[1] hooly rose she up,
To the place where he was lying,
And when she drew the curtain by,
'Young man, I think you 're dying.'

4 'O it 's I'm sick, and very, very sick,
And 't is a' for Barbara Allan:'
'O the better for me ye 's never be,
Tho your heart's blood were a spilling.

5 'O dinna ye mind, young man,' said she,
'When ye was in the tavern a drinking,
That ye made the healths gae round and round,
And slighted Barbara Allan?'

6 He turned his face unto the wall,
And death was with him dealing:
'Adieu, adieu, my dear friends all,
And be kind to Barbara Allan.'

7 And slowly, slowly raise she up,
And slowly, slowly left him,
And sighing said, she coud not stay,
Since death of life had reft him.

8 She had not gane a mile but twa,
When she heard the dead-bell ringing,
And every jow[2] that the dead-bell geid,[3]
It cry'd, 'Woe to Barbara Allan!'

9 'O mother, mother, make my bed!
O make it saft and narrow!
Since my love died for me to-day,
I 'll die for him to-morrow.'

LAMKIN

1 It 's Lamkin was a mason good
as ever built wi stane;
He built Lord Wearie's castle,
but payment got he nane.

[1] slowly. [2] stroke. [3] struck.

2 'O pay me, Lord Wearie,
come, pay me my fee:'
'I canna pay you, Lamkin,
for I maun gang oer the sea.'

3 'O pay me now, Lord Wearie,
come, pay me out o hand:'
'I canna pay you, Lamkin,
unless I sell my land.'

4 'O gin ye winna pay me,
I here sall mak a vow,
Before that ye come hame again,
ye sall hae cause to rue.'

5 Lord Wearie got a bonny ship,
to sail the saut sea faem;
Bade his lady weel the castle keep,
ay till he should come hame.

6 But the nourice was a fause limmer[1]
as eer hung on a tree;
She laid a plot wi Lamkin,
whan her lord was oer the sea.

7 She laid a plot wi Lamkin,
when the servants were awa,
Loot him in at a little shot-window,[2]
and brought him to the ha.

8 'O whare 's a' the men o this house,
that ca me Lamkin?'
'They 're at the barn-well thrashing;
't will be lang ere they come in.'

9 'And whare 's the women o this house,
that ca me Lamkin?'
'They 're at the far well washing;
't will be lang ere they come in.'

10 'And whare 's the bairns o this house,
that ca me Lamkin?'
'They 're at the school reading;
't will be night or they come hame.'

11 'O whare 's the lady o this house,
that ca's me Lamkin?'
'She 's up in her bower sewing,
but we soon we can bring her down.'

12 Then Lamkin 's tane a sharp knife,
that hang down by his gaire,[3]
And he has gien the bonny babe
a deep wound and a sair.

13 Then Lamkin he rocked,
and the fause nourice sang,
Till frae ilkae bore[4] o the cradle
the red blood out sprang.

14 Then out it spak the lady,
as she stood on the stair:
'What ails my bairn, nourice,
that he 's greeting sae sair?

15 'O still my bairn nourice,
O still him with the pap!'[5]
'He winna still, lady,
for this nor for that.'

16 'O still my bairn, nourice,
O still him wi the wand!'
'He winna still, lady,
for a' his father's land.'

17 'O still my bairn, nourice,
O still him wi the bell!'
'He winna still, lady,
till ye come down yoursel.'

18 O the firsten step she steppit,
she steppit on a stane;
But the neisten step she steppit,
she met him Lamkin.

19 'O mercy, mercy, Lamkin,
hae mercy upon me!
Though you 've taen my young son's life.
ye may let mysel be.'

20 'O sall I kill her, nourice,
or sall I lat her be?'
'O kill her, kill her, Lamkin,
for she neer was good to me.'

21 'O scour the bason, nourice,
and mak it fair and clean,
For to keep this lady's heart's blood,
for she 's come o noble kin.'

22 'There need nae bason, Lamkin,
lat it run through the floor;
What better is the heart's blood
o the rich than o the poor?'

23 But ere three months were at an end,
Lord Wearie came again;
But dowie,[6] dowie was his heart
when first he came hame.

[1] wretch. [2] top-hinged window. [3] gore. [4] hole. [5] breast. [6] sad.

24 'O wha's blood is this,' he says,
that lies in the chamer?'[1]
'It is your lady's heart's blood;
't is as clear as the lamer.'[2]

25 'And wha's blood is this,' he says,
'that lies in my ha?'
'It is your young son's heart's blood;
't is the clearest ava.'[3]

26 O sweetly sang the black-bird
that sat upon the tree;
But sairer grat[4] Lamkin,
when he was condemnd to die.

27 And bonny sang the mavis,[5]
out o the thorny brake;
But sairer grat the nourice,
when she was tied to the stake.

YOUNG WATERS

1 About Yule, when the wind blew cule,
And the round tables[6] began,
A there is cum to our king's court
Mony a well-favord man.

2 The queen luikt owre the castle-wa,
Beheld baith dale and down,
And there she saw Young Waters
Cum riding to the town.

3 His footmen they did rin before,
His horsemen rade behind;
And mantel of the burning gowd
Did keip him frae the wind.

4 Gowden-graithd[7] his horse before,
And siller-shod behind;
The horse Young Waters rade upon
Was fleeter than the wind.

5 Out then spack a wylie lord,
Unto the queen said he,
'O tell me wha 's the fairest face
Rides in the company?'

6 'I 've sene lord, and I've sene laird,
And knights of high degree,
Bot a fairer face than Young Waters
Mine eyne did never see.'

7 Out then spack the jealous king,
And an angry man was he:
'O if he had bin twice as fair,
You micht have excepted me.'

8 'You 're neither laird nor lord,' she says,
'Bot the king that wears the crown;
There is not a knight in fair Scotland
But to thee maun[8] bow down.'

9 For a' that she coud do or say,
Appeas'd he wad nae bee,
Bot for the words which she had said,
Young Waters he maun die.

10 They hae taen Young Waters,
And put fetters to his feet;
They hae taen Young Waters,
And thrown him in dungeon deep.

11 'Aft I have ridden thro Stirling town
In the wind bot and[9] the weit;
But I neir rade thro Stirling town
Wi fetters at my feet.

12 'Aft I have ridden thro Stirling town
In the wind bot and the rain;
Bot I neir rade thro Stirling town
Neir to return again.'

13 They hae taen to the heiding-hill
His young son in his craddle,
And they hae taen to the heiding-hill
His horse bot and his saddle.

14 They hae taen to the heiding-hill
His lady fair to see,
And for the words the queen had spoke
Young Waters he did die.

THE MAID FREED FROM THE GALLOWS[10]

1 'O good Lord Judge, and sweet Lord Judge,
Peace for a little while!
Methinks I see my own father,
Come riding by the stile.

[1] chamber. [2] amber. [3] of all. [4] wept.
[5] thrush. [6] a game. [7] Gold-shod.
[8] must. [9] and also.
[10] This ballad is often cited as an example of genuine ballad structure.

2 'Oh father, oh father, a little of your gold,
And likewise of your fee!
To keep my body from yonder grave,
And my neck from the gallows-tree.'

3 'None of my gold now you shall have,
Nor likewise of my fee;
For I am come to see you hangd,
And hanged you shall be.

4 'Oh good Lord Judge, and sweet Lord Judge,
Peace for a little while!
Methinks I see my own mother,
Come riding by the stile.

5 'Oh mother, oh mother, a little of your gold,
And likewise of your fee,
To keep my body from yonder grave,
And my neck from the gallows-tree!'

6 'None of my gold now shall you have,
Nor likewise of my fee;
For I am come to see you hangd,
And hanged you shall be.'

7 'Oh good Lord Judge, and sweet Lord Judge,
Peace for a little while!
Methinks I see my own brother,
Come riding by the stile.'

8 'Oh brother, oh brother, a little of your gold,
And likewise of your fee,
To keep my body from yonder grave,
And my neck from the gallows-tree!'

9 'None of my gold now shall you have.
Nor likewise of my fee;
For I am come to see you hangd,
And hanged you shall be.'

10 'Oh good Lord Judge, and sweet Lord Judge,
Peace for a little while!
Methinks I see my own sister.
Come riding by the stile.

11 'Oh sister, oh sister, a little of your gold,
And likewise of your fee,
To keep my body from yonder grave,
And my neck from the gallows-tree!'

12 'None of my gold now shall you have,
Nor likewise of my fee;
For I am come to see you hangd
And hanged you shall be.'

13 'Oh good Lord Judge, and sweet Lord Judge,
Peace for a little while!
Methinks I see my own true-love,
Come riding by the stile.

14 'Oh true-love, oh true-love, a little of your gold,
And likewise of your fee,
To save my body from yonder grave,
And my neck from the gallows-tree.'

15 'Some of my gold now you shall have,
And likewise of my fee,
For I am come to see you saved,
And saved you shall be.'

THE GAY GOSS-HAWK

1 'O WELL 's me o my gay goss-hawk,
That he can speak and flee;
He 'll carry a letter to my love,
Bring back another to me.'

2 'O how can I your true-love ken,[1]
Or how can I her know?
Whan frae her mouth I never heard couth,[2]
Nor wi my eyes her saw.'

3 'O well sal ye my true-love ken,
As soon as you her see;
For, of a' the flowrs in fair Englan,
The fairest flowr is she.

4 'At even at my love's bowr-door
There grows a bowing birk,
An sit ye down and sing thereon,
As she gangs to the kirk.

5 'An four-and-twenty ladies fair
Will wash and go to kirk,
But well shall ye my true-love ken,
For she wears goud on her skirt.

6 'An four and twenty gay ladies
Will to the mass repair,
But well sal ye my true-love ken,
For she wears goud on her hair.'

[1] know. [2] sound, word.

7 O even at that lady's bowr-door,
There grows a bowin birk,
An he set down and sang thereon,
As she ged to the kirk.

8 'O eet and drink, my marys[1] a',
The wine flows you among,
Till I gang to my shot-window,
An hear yon bonny bird's song.

9 'Sing on, sing on, my bonny bird,
The song ye sang the streen,[2]
For I ken by your sweet singin
You 're frae my true-love sen.'

10 O first he sang a merry song,
An then he sang a grave,
An then he peckd his feathers gray,
To her the letter gave.

11 'Ha, there 's a letter frae your love,
He says he sent you three;
He canna wait your love langer,
But for your sake he 'll die.

12 'He bids you write a letter to him;
He says he 's sent you five;
He canno wait your love langer,
Tho you 're the fairest woman alive.'

13 'Ye bid him bake his bridal-bread,
And brew his bridal-ale,
An I 'll meet him in fair Scotlan
Lang, lang or it be stale.'

14 She 's doen her to her father dear,
Fa'n low down on her knee:
'A boon, a boon, my father dear,
I pray you, grant it me.'

15 'Ask on, ask on, my daughter,
An granted it sal be;
Except ae squire in fair Scotlan,
An him you sall never see.'

16 'The only boon, my father dear,
That I do crave of the,
Is, gin I die in southin lands,
In Scotland to bury me.

17 'An the firstin kirk that ye come till,
Ye gar the bells be rung,
An the nextin kirk that ye come till,
Ye gar the mess be sung.

[1] maids. [2] yester evening.

18 'And the thirdin kirk that ye come till,
You deal gold for my sake,
An the fourthin kirk that ye come till,
You tarry there till night.'

19 She is doen her to her bigly[3] bowr,
As fast as she coud fare,
An she has tane a sleepy draught,
That she had mixed wi care.

20 She 's laid her down upon her bed,
An soon she 's fa'n asleep,
And soon oer every tender limb
Cauld death began to creep.

21 Whan night was flown, an day was come,
Nae ane that did her see
But thought she was as surely dead
As ony lady coud be.

22 Her father an her brothers dear
Gard make[4] to her a bier;
The tae half was o guide red gold,
The tither o silver clear.

23 Her mither an her sisters fair
Gard work for her a sark;[5]
The tae half was o cambrick fine,
The tither o needle wark.

24 The firstin kirk that they came till,
They gard the bells be rung,
And the nextin kirk that they came till,
They gard the mess be sung.

25 The thirdin kirk that they came till,
They dealt gold for her sake,
An the fourthin kirk that they came till,
Lo, there they met her make![6]

26 'Lay down, lay down the bigly bier.
Let me the dead look on;'
Wi cheery cheeks and ruby lips
She lay an smil'd on him.

27 'O ae sheave[7] o your bread, true-love,
An ae glass o your wine,
For I hae fasted for your sake
These fully days is nine.

[3] fine. [4] Had made. [5] shirt, shroud.
[6] mate, lover. [7] slice.

28 'Gang hame, gang hame, my seven bold brothers,
Gang hame and sound your horn;
An ye may boast in southin lans
Your sister 's playd you scorn.'

THE BAILIFF'S DAUGHTER OF ISLINGTON

1 THERE was a youth, and a well belovd youth,
And he was a esquire's son,
He loved the bayliff's daughter dear,
That lived in Islington.

2 She was coy, and she would not believe
That he did love her so,
No, nor at any time she would
Any countenance to him show.

3 But when his friends did understand
His fond and foolish mind,
They sent him up to fair London,
An apprentice for to bind.

4 And when he had been seven long years,
And his love he had not seen,
'Many a tear have I shed for her sake
When she little thought of me.'

5 All the maids of Islington
Went forth to sport and play;
All but the bayliff's daughter dear;
She secretly stole away.

6 She put off her gown of gray,
And put on her puggish[1] attire;
She 's up to fair London gone,
Her true-love to require.

7 As she went along the road,
The weather being hot and dry,
There was she aware of her true-love,
At length came riding by.

8 She stept to him, as red as any rose,
And took him by the bridle-ring:
'I pray you, kind sir, give me one penny,
To ease my weary limb.'

9 'I prithee, sweetheart, canst thou tell me
Where that thou wast born?'
At Islington, kind sir,' said she,
'Where I have had many a scorn.'

10 'I prithee, sweetheart, canst thou tell me
Whether thou dost know
The bailiff's daughter of Islington?'
'She 's dead, sir, long ago.'

11 'Then will I sell my goodly steed,
My saddle and my bow;
I will into some far countrey,
Where no man doth me know.'

12 'O stay, O stay, thou goodly youth!
She 's alive, she is not dead;
Here she standeth by thy side,
And is ready to be thy bride.'

13 'O farewel grief, and welcome joy,
Ten thousand times and more!
For now I have seen my own true-love,
That I thought I should have seen no more.'

THE GREAT SILKIE OF SULE SKERRY[2]

1 AN eartly nourris sits and sings,
And aye she sings, 'Ba, lily wean!
Little ken I my bairnis father,
Far less the land that he staps in.'

2 Then ane arose at her bed-fit,
An a grumly[3] guest I 'm sure was he:
'Here am I, thy bairnis father,
Although that I be not comelie.

3 'I am a man, upo the lan,
An I am a silkie in the sea;
And when I 'm far and far frae lan,
My dwelling is in Sule Skerrie.'

4 'It was na weel,' quo the maiden fair,
'It was na weel, indeed,' quo she,
'That the Great Silkie of Sule Skerrie
Suld hae come and aught[4] a bairn to me.'

5 Now he has taen a purse of goud,
And he has pat it upo her knee,

[1] ragged? tramp's?

[2] "The Great Seal of Sule Reef." This fine ballad, reminding one of Arnold's *Forsaken Merman*, was obtained from an old lady in the Shetland Islands in 1852.

[3] fierce. [4] owed.

Sayin, 'Gie to me my little young son,
An tak thee up thy nourris-fee.

6 'An it sall come to pass on a simmer's day,
When the sin shines het on evera stane,
That I will tak my little young son,
An teach him for to swim the faem.

7 'An thu sall marry a proud gunner,
An a proud gunner I 'm sure he 'll be,
An the very first schot that ere he schoots,
He 'll schoot baith my young son and me.'

JOHNIE COCK

1 JOHNY he has risen up i the morn,
Calls for water to wash his hands;
But little knew he that his bloody hounds
Were bound in iron bands.[1] bands
Were bound in iron bands.

2 Johny's mother has gotten word o that,
And care-bed [2] she has taen:
'O Johny, for my benison,
I beg you 'l stay at hame;
For the wine so red, and the well baken bread,
My Johny shall want nane.

3 'There are seven forsters at Pickeram Side,
At Pickeram where they dwell,
And for a drop of thy heart's bluid
They wad ride the fords of hell.'

4 Johny he 's gotten word of that,
And he 's turnd wondrous keen;
He 's put off the red scarlett,
And he 's put on the Lincolm green.

5 With a sheaf of arrows by his side,
And a bent bow in his hand,
He 's mounted on a prancing steed,
And he has ridden fast oer the strand.

6 He 's up i Braidhouplee, and down i Bradyslee,
And under a buss [3] o broom,
And there he found a good dun deer,
Feeding in a buss of ling.[4]

7 Johny shot, and the dun deer lap,
And she lap wondrous wide,
Until they came to the wan water,
And he stemd her of her pride.

8 He 'as taen out the little pen-knife,
'T was full three quarters [5] long,
And he has taen out of that dun deer
The liver bot and [6] the tongue.

9 They eat of the flesh, and they drank of the blood,
And the blood it was so sweet,
Which caused Johny and his bloody hounds
To fall in a deep sleep.

10 By then came an old palmer,
And an ill death may he die!
For he 's away to Pickram Side,
As fast as he can drie.[7]

11 'What news, what news?' says the Seven Forsters,
'What news have ye brought to me?'
'I have noe news,' the palmer said,
'But what I saw with my eye.

12 'High up i Bradyslee, low down i Bradisslee,
And under a buss of scroggs,[8]
O there I spied a well-wight [9] man,
Sleeping among his dogs.

13 'His coat it was of Light Lincolm,
And his breeches of the same,
His shoes of the American leather,
And gold buckles tying them.'

14 Up bespake the Seven Forsters,
Up bespake they ane and a':
'O that is Johny o Cockleys Well,
And near him we will draw.'

15 O the first y [10] stroke that they gae him,
They struck him off by the knee;
Then up bespake his sister's son:
'O the next 'll gar him die!'

16 'O some they count ye well-wight men,
But I do count ye nane;
For you might well ha wakend me,
And askd gin I wad [11] be taen.

[1] Because it was the close season? But cf. stanza 9.
[2] sick-bed. [3] bush. [4] heather.
[5] Of a yard. [6] and also. [7] stand it. [8] shrubs.
[9] right doughty. [10] one. [11] if I would.

17 'The wildest wolf in aw this wood
Wad not ha done so by me;
She 'd ha wet her foot ith wan water,
And sprinkled it oer my brae,[1]
And if that wad not ha wakend me,
She wad ha gone and let me be.

18 'O bows of yew, if ye be true,
In London, where ye were bought,
Fingers five, get up belive,
Manhuid shall fail me nought.'

19 He has killd the Seven Forsters,
He has killd them all but ane,
And that wan scarce to Pickeram Side,
To carry the bode-words[2] hame.

20 'Is there never a boy[3] in a' this wood
That will tell what I can say;
That will go to Cockleys Well,
Tell my mither to fetch me away?'

21 There was a boy into that wood,
That carried the tidings away,
And many ae[4] was the well-wight man
At the fetching o Johny away.

ROBIN HOOD AND GUY OF GISBORNE[5]

1 When shawes[6] beene sheene, and shradds[7] full fayre,
And leeves both large and longe,
Itt is merry, walking in the fayre fforrest,
To heare the small birds songe.

2 The woodweele[8] sang, and wold not cease,
Amongst the leaves a lyne:[9]
And it is by two wight yeomen,
By deare God, *that* I meane.

. . . . . .

3 'Me thought they did mee beate and binde,
And tooke my bow mee froe;
If I bee Robin a-live in this lande,
I 'le be wrocken[10] on both them towe.'[11]

4 'Sweavens[12] are swift, *master*,' quoth Iohn
'As the wind *that* blowes ore a hill;
Ffor if itt be never soe lowde this night,
To-morrow it may be still.'

5 'Buske[13] yee, bowne[14] yee, my merry men all.
Ffor Iohn shall goe with mee;
For I 'le goe seeke yond wight yeomen
In greenwood where the bee.'

6 The cast on their gowne of greene,
A shooting gone are they,
Untill they came to the merry greenwood,
Where they had gladdest bee;
There were the ware of [a] wight yeoman,
His body leaned to a tree.

7 A sword and a dagger he wore by his side,
Had beene many a mans bane,[15]
And he was cladd in his capull-hyde,[16]
Topp, and tayle, and mayne.

8 'Stand you still, *master*,' quoth Litle Iohn,
'Under this trusty tree,
And I will goe to yond wight yeoman,
To know his meaning trulye.'

9 'A, Iohn, by me thou setts noe store,
And *that* 's a ffarley[17] thinge;
How offt send I my men beffore,
And tarry my-selfe behinde?

10 'It is noe cunning a knave to ken,
And[18] a man but here him speake;
And itt were not for bursting of my bowe,
Iohn, I wold thy head breake.'

11 But often words they breeden bale,[19]
That parted Robin and Iohn;

[1] brow. [2] news. [3] It is a *bird* in the other versions. [4] a one.

[5] There are some two score ballads of Robin Hood, the oldest in a MS., of about 1450; and one of these, printed about 1500, is the *Gest of Robyn Hode* in 456 stanzas — apparently nothing less than a little popular epic, wrought from separate, episodic ballads. The material is of course much older, for in *Piers Plowman*, composed about 1377, we learn that Sloth knew "rhymes of Robin Hood and Randolf Earl of Chester" better than he did his paternoster. Robin is a ballad creation, the ideal champion of the common people against their secular and spiritual oppressors, and the embodiment of the old English love of fair play and the open air.

[6] thickets. [7] coppices. [8] thrush? [9] of linden. [10] revenged. [11] two. [12] dreams. [13] Equip. [14] prepare. [15] destruction. [16] horse-hide. [17] strange. [18] If. [19] make trouble.

Iohn is gone to Barn [e] sdale,[1]
The gates [2] he knowes eche one.

12 And when hee came to Barnesdale,
Great heavinesse there hee hadd;
He ffound two of his fellowes
Were slaine both in a slade,[3]

13 And Scarlett a ffoote flyinge was,
Over stockes and stone,
For the sheriffe with seven score men
Fast after him is gone.

14 'Yett one shoote I 'le shoote,' sayes Litle Iohn,
'With Crist his might and mayne;
I 'le make yond fellow *that* flyes soe fast
To be both glad and ffaine.'

15 Iohn bent vp a good veiwe [4] bow,
And ffetteled [5] him to shoote;
The bow was made of a tender boughe,
And fell downe to his foote.

16 'Woe worth thee, wicked wood,' sayd Litle Iohn,
'*That* ere thou grew on a tree!
Ffor this day thou art my bale,
My boote [6] when thou shold bee!'

17 This shoote it was but looselye shott,
The arrowe flew in vaine,
And it mett one of the sheriffes men;
Good *William* a Trent was slaine.

18 It had beene better for *William* a Trent
To hange upon a gallowe
Then for to lye in the greenwoode,
There slaine with an arrowe.

19 And it is sayd, when men be mett,
Six can doe more then three:
And they have tane Litle Iohn,
And bound him ffast to a tree.

20 'Thou shalt be drawen by dale and downe,' *quoth* the sheriffe,
'And hanged hye on a hill:'
'But thou may ffayle,' *quoth* Litle Iohn,
'If itt be Christs owne will.'

21 Let us leave talking of Litle Iohn,
For hee is bound fast to a tree,
And talke of Guy and Robin Hood,
In the green woode where they bee.

22 How these two yeomen together they mett,
Under the leaves of lyne,
To see what marchandise they made
Even at that same time.

23 'Good morrow, good fellow,' *quoth* Sir Guy;
'Good morrow, good ffellow,' *quoth* hee;
'Methinkes by this bow thou beares in thy hand,
A good archer thou seems to bee.'

24 'I am wilfull of my way,' [7] *quoth* Sir Guye,
'And of my morning tyde:' [8]
'I 'le lead thee through the wood,' *quoth* Robin,
'Good ffellow, I 'le be thy guide.'

25 'I seeke an outlaw,' *quoth* Sir Guye,
'Men call him Robin Hood;
I had rather meet with him upon a day
Then forty pound of golde.'

26 'If you tow mett, itt wold be seene whether were better
Afore yee did *part* awaye;
Let us some other pastime find,
Good ffellow, I thee pray.

27 'Let us some other masteryes [9] make,
And wee will walke in the woods even;
Wee may chance mee[t] with Robin Hoode
Att some unsett steven.' [10]

28 They cutt them downe the *summer* shroggs [11]
Which grew both under a bryar,
And sett them three score rood in twinn,[12]
To shoote the prickes [13] full neare.

29 'Leade on, good ffellow,' sayd Sir Guye,
'Lead on, I doe bidde thee:'
'Nay, by my faith,' *quoth* Robin Hood,
'The leader thou shalt bee.'

[1] In Yorkshire. [2] ways. [3] valley.
[4] yew. [5] prepared. [6] salvation.
[7] i.e., am lost. [8] Possibly he wants to know the time, as well as the road. [9] trials of skill. [10] unexpected time. [11] shrubs. [12] rods distant. [13] targets.

30 The first good shoot *that* Robin ledd
Did not shoote an inch the pricke ffroe;
Guy was an archer good enoughe,
But he cold neere shoote soe.

31 The second shoote Sir Guy shott,
He shott within the garlande;[1]
But Robin Hoode shott it better then hee,
For he clove the good pricke-wande.

32 'Gods blessing on thy heart!' sayes Guye,
'Goode ffellow, thy shooting is goode;
For an thy hart be as good as thy hands,
Thou were better then Robin Hood.

33 'Tell me thy name, good ffellow,' quoth Guy,
'Under the leaves of lyne:'
'Nay, by my faith,' quoth good Robin,
'Till thou have told me thine.'

34 'I dwell by dale and downe,' quoth Guye,
And I have done many a curst turne;
And he *that* calles me by my right name
Calles me Guye of good Gysborne.'

35 'My dwelling is in the wood,' sayes Robin;
'By thee I set right nought;
My name is Robin Hood of Barnesdale,
A ffellow thou has long sought.'

36 He *that* had neither beene a kithe nor kin
Might have seene a full fayre sight,
To see how together these yeomen went,
With blades both browne and bright.

37 To have seene how these yeomen together foug[ht],
Two howers of a summers day;
Itt was neither Guy nor Robin Hood
That ffettled them to flye away.

38 Robin was reacheles on[2] a roote,
And stumbled at *that* tyde,
And Guy was quicke and nimble withall,
And hitt him ore the left side.

39 'Ah, deere Lady!' sayd Robin Hoode,
'Thou art both mother and may![3]
I thinke it was never mans destinye
To dye before his day.'

40 Robin thought on Our Lady deere,
And soone leapt up againe,
And thus he came with an awkwarde[4] stroke;
Good Sir Guy hee has slayne.

41 He tooke Sir Guys head by the hayre,
And sticked itt on his bowes end:
'Thou hast beene traytor all thy liffe,
Which thing must have an ende.'

42 Robin pulled forth an Irish kniffe,
And nicked Sir Guy in the ffface,
That hee was never on a woman borne
Cold tell who Sir Guye was.

43 Saies, 'Lye there, lye there, good Sir Guye,
And with me be not wrothe;
If thou have had the worse stroakes at my hand,
Thou shalt have the better cloathe.'

44 Robin did off his gowne of greene,
Sir Guy hee did it throwe;
And hee put on *that* capull-hyde,
That cladd him topp to toe.

45 'The bowe, the arrowes, and litle horne,
And with me now I 'le beare;
Ffor now I will goe to Barn[e]sdale,
To see how my men doe ffare.'

46 Robin sett Guyes horne to his mouth,
A lowd blast in it he did blow;
That beheard the sheriffe of Nottingham,
As he leaned under a lowe.[5]

47 'Hearken! hearken!' sayd the sheriffe,
'I heard noe tydings but good;
For yonder I heare Sir Guyes horne blowe,
For he hath slaine Robin Hoode.

48 'For yonder I heare Sir Guyes horne blow,
Itt blowes soe well in tyde,
For yonder comes *that* wighty yeoman,
Cladd in his capull-hyde.

[1] Of leaves hung on the rod?
[2] heedless of.
[3] maid.
[4] backhand.
[5] hill.

49 'Come hither, thou good Sir Guy,
Aske of mee what thou wilt have':
'I'le none of thy gold,' sayes Robin Hood,
'Nor I 'le none of itt have.

50 'But now I have slaine the *master*,' he sayd,
'Let me goe strike the knave;
This is all the reward I aske,
Nor noe other will I have.'

51 'Thou art a madman,' said the shiriffe,
'Thou sholdest have had a knights ffee;
Seeing thy asking [hath] beene soe badd,
Well granted it shall be.'

52 But Litle Iohn heard his *master* speake,
Well he knew *that* was his steven; [1]
'Now shall I be loset,' *quoth* Litle Iohn,
'With Christs might in heaven.'

53 But Robin hee hyed him towards Litle Iohn,
Hee thought hee wold loose him belive;
The sheriffe and all his companye
Fast after him did drive.

54 'Stand abacke! stand abacke!' sayd Robin;
'Why draw you mee soe neere?
Itt was never the use in our countrye
One's shrift another shold heere.'

55 But Robin pulled forth an Irysh kniffe,
And losed Iohn hand and ffoote,
And gave him Sir Guyes bow in his hand,
And bade it be his boote.

56 But Iohn tooke Guyes bow in his hand—
His arrowes were rawstye by the roote [2]—;
The sherriffe saw Litle Iohn draw a bow
And ffettle him to shoote.

57 Towards his house in Nottingam
He ffled full fast away,
And soe did all his companye,
Not one behind did stay.

58 But he cold neither soe fast goe,
Nor away soe fast runn,
But Litle Iohn, with an arrow broade,
Did cleave his heart in twinn.

[1] voice. [2] rusted on the end?

ROBIN HOOD'S DEATH AND BURIAL

1 When Robin Hood and Little John—
Down a down a down a down—
Went oer yon bank of broom,
Said Robin Hood bold to Little John,
'We have shot for many a pound.'
Hey down, a down, a down.

2 'But I am not able to shoot one shot more,
My broad arrows will not flee;
But I have a cousin lives down below,
Please God, she will bleed me.'

3 Now Robin he is to fair Kirkly gone,
As fast as he can win; [3]
But before he came there, as we do hear,
He was taken very ill.

4 And when he came to fair Kirkly-hall,
He knockd all at the ring,
But none was so ready as his cousin herself
For to let bold Robin in.

5 'Will you please to sit down, cousin Robin,' she said,
'And drink some beer with me?'
'No, I will neither eat nor drink,
Till I am blooded by thee.'

6 'Well, I have a room, cousin Robin,' she said,
'Which you did never see,
And if you please to walk therein,
You blooded by me shall be.'

7 She took him by the lily-white hand,
And led him to a private room,
And there she blooded bold Robin Hood,
While one drop of blood would run down.

8 She blooded him in a vein of the arm,
And locked him up in the room;
Then did he bleed all the live-long day,
Until the next day at noon.

9 He then bethought him of a casement there,
Thinking for to get down;
But was so weak he could not leap,
He could not get him down.

[3] manage.

10 He then bethought him of his bugle-horn,
Which hung low down to his knee;
He set his horn unto his mouth,
And blew out weak blasts three.

11 Then Little John, when hearing him,
As he sat under a tree,
'I fear my master is now near dead,
He blows so wearily.'

12 Then Little John to fair Kirkly is gone,
As fast as he can dree;[1]
But when he came to Kirkly-hall,
He broke locks two or three:

13 Until he came bold Robin to see,
Then he fell on his knee;
'A boon, a boon,' cries Little John,
'Master, I beg of thee.'

14 'What is that boon,' said Robin Hood,
'Little John, [thou] begs of me?'
'It is to burn fair Kirkly-hall,
And all their nunnery.'

15 'Now nay, now nay,' quoth Robin Hood.
'That boon I 'll not grant thee;
I never hurt woman in all my life,
Nor men in woman's company.

16 'I never hurt fair maid in all my time,
Nor at mine end shall it be;
But give me my bent bow in my hand,
And a broad arrow I 'll let flee
And where this arrow is taken up,
There shall my grave digged be.

17 'Lay me a green sod under my head,
And another at my feet;
And lay my bent bow by my side,
Which was my music sweet;
And make my grave of gravel and green,
Which is most right and meet.

18 'Let me have length and breadth enough,
With a green sod under my head;
That they may say, when I am dead,
Here lies bold Robin Hood.'

19 These words they readily granted him,
Which did bold Robin please:
And there they buried bold Robin Hood,
Within the fair Kirkleys.

[1] endure, go.

ROBIN HOOD RESCUING THE WIDOW'S THREE SONS

1 THERE are twelve months in all the year
As I hear many men say,
But the merriest month in all the year,
Is the merry month of May.

2 Now Robin Hood is to Nottingham gone,
With a link a down and a day,
And there he met a silly old woman,
Was weeping on the way.

3 'What news? what news, thou silly old woman?
What news hast thou for me?'
Said she, 'There 's three squires in Nottingham town
To-day is condemned to die.'

4 'O have they parishes burnt?' he said,
'Or have they ministers slain?
Or have they robbed any virgin,
Or with other men's wives have lain?'

5 'They have no parishes burned, good sir,
Nor yet have ministers slain,
Nor have they robbed any virgin,
Nor with other men's wives have lain.'

6 'O what have they done?' said bold Robin Hood,
'I pray thee tell to me:'
'It 's for slaying of the king's fallow deer,
Bearing their long bows with thee.'

7 'Dost thou not mind, old woman,' he said,
'Since thou made me sup and dine?
By the truth of my body,' quoth bold Robin Hood,
'You could not tell it in better time.'

8 Now Robin Hood is to Nottingham gone,
With a link a down and a day,
And there he met with a silly old palmer,
Was walking along the highway.

9 'What news? what news, thou silly old man?
What news, I do thee pray?'
Said he, 'Three squires in Nottingham town
Are condemned to die this day.'

10 'Come change thy apparel with me, old man,
Come change thy apparel for mine;
Here is forty shillings in good silver,
Go drink it in beer or wine.'

11 'O thine apparel is good,' he said,
'And mine is ragged and torn;
Wherever you go, wherever you ride,
Laugh neer an old man to scorn.'

12 'Come change thy apparel with me, old churl,
Come change thy apparel with mine;
Here are twenty pieces of good broad gold,
Go feast thy brethren with wine.'

13 Then he put on the old man's hat,
It stood full high on the crown:
'The first bold bargain that I come at,
It shall make thee come down.'

14 Then he put on the old man's cloak,
Was patchd black, blew, and red;
He thought no shame all the day long
To wear the bags of bread.

15 Then he put on the old man's breeks,[1]
Was patchd from ballup[2] to side;
'By the truth of my body,' bold Robin can say,
'This man lovd little pride.'

16 Then he put on the old man's hose,
Were patched from knee to wrist;
'By the truth of my body,' said bold Robin Hood,
'I'd laugh if I had any list.'[3]

17 Then he put on the old man's shoes,
Were patched both beneath and aboon;
Then Robin Hood swore a solemn oath,
'It's good habit that makes a man.'

18 Now Robin Hood is to Nottingham gone,
With a link a down and a down,
And there he met with the proud sheriff,
Was walking along the town.

19 'O save, O save, O sheriff,' he said,
'O save, and you may see!
And what will you give to a silly old man
To-day will your hangman be?'

20 'Some suits, some suits,' the sheriff he said,
'Some suits I'll give to thee;
Some suits, some suits, and pence thirteen
To-day's a hangman's fee.'

21 Then Robin he turns him round about,
And jumps from stock to stone;
'By the truth of my body,' the sheriff he said,
'That's well jumpt, thou nimble old man.'

22 'I was neer a hangman in all my life,
Nor yet intends to trade;
But curst be he,' said bold Robin,
'That first a hangman was made.

23 I've a bag for meal, and a bag for malt,
And a bag for barley and corn;
A bag for bread, and a bag for beef,
And a bag for my little small horn.

24 'I have a horn in my pocket,
I got it from Robin Hood,
And still when I set it to my mouth
For thee it blows little good.'

25 'O wind thy horn, thou proud fellow,
Of thee I have no doubt;
I wish that thou give such a blast
Till both thy eyes fall out.'

26 The first loud blast that he did blow,
He blew both loud and shrill;
A hundred and fifty of Robin Hood's men
Came riding over the hill.

27 The next loud blast that he did give,
He blew both loud and amain,
And quickly sixty of Robin Hood's men
Came shining over the plain.

28 'O who are you,' the sheriff he said
'Come tripping over the lee?'
'The're my attendants,' brave Robin did say,
'They'll pay a visit to thee.'

29 They took the gallows from the slack,[4]
They set it in the glen,
They hangd the proud sheriff on that,
Releasd their own three men.

[1] breeches. [2] front flap. [3] inclination. [4] low place.

HUGH OF LINCOLN.[1]

1 Four and twenty bonny boys
Were playing at the ba,
And by it came him sweet Sir Hugh,
And he playd oer them a'.

2 He kicked the ba with his right foot,
And catchd it wi his knee,
And throuch-and-thro the Jew's window
He gard[2] the bonny ba flee.

3 He 's doen him to the Jew's castell,
And walked it round about;
And there he saw the Jew's daughter,
At the window looking out.

4 'Throw down the ba, ye Jew's daughter,
Throw down the ba to me!'
'Never a bit,' says the Jew's daughter,
'Till up to me come ye.'

5 'How will I come up? How can I come up?
How can I come to thee?
For as ye did to my auld father,
The same ye 'll do to me.'

6 She 's gane till her father's garden,
And pu'd an apple red and green;
'T was a' to wyle him sweet Sir Hugh,
And to entice him in.

7 She 's led him in through ae dark door,
And sae has she thro nine;
She 's laid him on a dressing-table,
And stickit him like a swine.

8 And first came out the thick, thick blood,
And syne[3] came out the thin,
And syne came out the bonny heart's blood;
There was nae mair within.

9 She 's rowd[4] him in a cake o lead,
Bade him lie still and sleep;
She 's thrown him in Our Lady's draw-well,
Was fifty fathom deep.

10 When bells were rung, and mass was sung,
And a' the bairns came hame,
When every lady gat hame her son,
The Lady Maisry gat nane.

11 She 's taen her mantle her about,
Her coffer by the hand,
And she 's gane out to seek her son,
And wanderd oer the land.

12 She 's doen her to the Jew's castell,
Where a' were fast asleep:
'Gin ye be there, my sweet Sir Hugh,
I pray you to me speak.'

13 She 's doen her to the Jew's garden,
Thought he had been gathering fruit:
'Gin ye be there, my sweet Sir Hugh,
I pray you to me speak.'

14 She neard Our Lady's deep draw-well,
Was fifty fathom deep:
'Whareer ye be, my sweet Sir Hugh,
I pray you to me speak.'

15 'Gae hame, gae hame, my mither dear,
Prepare my winding sheet,
And at the back o merry Lincoln
The morn[5] I will you meet.'

16 Now Lady Maisry is gane hame,
Made him a winding sheet,
And at the back o merry Lincoln
The dead corpse did her meet.

17 And a' the bells o merry Lincoln
Without men's hands were rung,
And a' the books o merry Lincoln
Were read without man's tongue,
And neer was such a burial
Sin Adam's days begun.

[1] Or *The Jew's Daughter*. The thirteenth century chroniclers tell the story. Such fabrications directed against the Jews have persisted ever since, especially in Russia. Cf. Chaucer's *Prioress's Tale*.
[2] made. [3] then. [4] rolled.

THE BATTLE OF OTTERBURN[6]

1 It fell about the Lammas time,
When the muir-men won their hay,
That the doughty Earl Douglas went
Into England to catch a prey.

[5] tomorrow.
[6] This battle was fought in 1388, and Froissart has a fine account of it in his *Chronicles* for that year. The ballad grew up presumably soon after. Our version is that supplied by James Hogg to Sir Walter Scott.

2 He chose the Gordons and the Graemes,
With the Lindsays light and gay;
But the Jardines wadna wi him ride,
And they rued it to this day.

3 And he has burnt the dales o Tine
And part of Almonshire,
And three good towers on Roxbrugh fells
He left them all on fire.

4 Then he marched up to Newcastle,
And rode it round about:
'O whae 's the lord of this castle,
Or whae 's the lady o 't ?'

5 But up spake proud Lord Piercy then,
And O but he spak hie !
'I am the lord of this castle,
And my wife 's the lady gaye.'

6 'If you are lord of this castle,
Sae weel it pleases me;
For ere I cross the border again
The ane of us shall die.'

7 He took a lang speir in his hand,
Was made of the metal free,
And for to meet the Douglas then
He rode most furiously.

8 But O how pale his lady lookd,
Frae off the castle wa,
When down before the Scottish spear
She saw brave Piercy fa !

9 How pale and wan his lady lookd,
Frae off the castle hieght,
When she beheld her Piercy yield
To doughty Douglas' might !

10 'Had we twa been upon the green,
And never an eye to see,
I should have had ye flesh and fell;
But your sword shall gae wi me.'

11 'But gae you up to Otterburn,
And there wait dayes three,
And if I come not ere three days' end
A fause lord ca ye me.'

12 'The Otterburn 's a bonny burn,
'Tis pleasant there to be,
But there is naught at Otterburn
To feed my men and me.

13 'The deer rins wild owr hill and dale,
The birds fly wild frae tree to tree,
And there is neither bread nor kale
To fend my men and me.

14 'But I will stay at Otterburn,
Where you shall welcome be;
And if ye come not ere three days' end
A coward I 'll ca thee.

15 'Then gae your ways to Otterburn,
And there wait dayes three;
And if I come not ere three days' end
A coward ye's ca me.'

16 They lighted high on Otterburn,
Upon the bent[1] so brown,
They lighted high on Otterburn,
And threw their pallions[2] down.

17 And he that had a bonny boy
Sent his horses to grass,
And he that had not a bonny boy
His ain servant he was.

18 But up then spak a little page,
Before the peep of the dawn;
'O waken ye, waken ye, my good lord,
For Piercy 's hard at hand ! '

19 'Ye lie, ye lie, ye loud liar,
Sae loud I hear ye lie !
The Piercy hadna men yestreen
To dight[3] my men and me.

20 'But I have seen a dreary dream,
Beyond the isle o Sky;
I saw a dead man won the fight,
And I think that man was I.'

21 He belted on his good broad-sword
And to the field he ran,
Where he met wi the proud Piercy,
And a' his goodly train.

22 When Piercy wi the Douglas met,
I wat he was right keen;
They swakked their swords till sair they swat,
And the blood ran them between.

23 But Piercy wi his good broad-sword,
Was made o the metal free,
Has wounded Douglas on the brow
Till backward he did flee.

[1] moor. [2] pavilions. [3] clean up.

24 Then he calld on his little page,
And said, 'Run speedily,
And bring my ain dear sister's son,
Sir Hugh Montgomery.'

25 Who, when he saw the Douglas bleed,
His heart was wonder wae:
'Now, by my sword, that haughty lord
Shall rue before he gae.'

26 'My nephew bauld,' the Douglas said,
'What boots the death of ane?
Last night I dreamed a dreary dream,
And I ken the day 's thy ain.[1]

27 'I dreamd I saw a battle fought
Beyond the isle o Sky,
When lo! a dead man wan the field,
And I thought that man was I.

28 'My wound is deep, I fain wad sleep,
Nae mair I 'll fighting see;
Gae lay me in the breaken bush
That grows on yonder lee.

29 'But tell na ane of my brave men
That I lye bleeding wan,
But let the name of Douglas still
Be shouted in the van.

30 'And bury me here on this lee,
Beneath the blooming briar,
And never let a mortal ken
A kindly Scot lyes here.'

31 He liftit up that noble lord,
Wi the saut tear in his ee,
And hid him in the breaken bush,
On yonder lily lee.

32 The moon was clear, the day drew near,
The spears in flinters flew,
But mony gallant Englishman
Ere day the Scotsman slew.

33 Sir Hugh Montgomery he rode
Thro all the field in sight,
And loud the name of Douglas still
He urgd wi a' his might.

34 The Gordons good, in English blood
They steeped their hose and shoon,
The Lindsays flew like fire about,
Till a' the fray was doon.

[1] own.

35 When stout Sir Hugh wi Piercy met,
I wat he was right fain;
They swakked their swords till sair they swat,
And the blood ran down like rain.

36 'O yield thee, Piercy,' said Sir Hugh,
'O yield, or ye shall die!'
'Fain wad I yield,' proud Piercy said,
'But neer to loun[2] like thee.'

37 'Thou shalt not yield to knave nor loun,
Nor shalt thou yield to me;
But yield thee to the breaken bush
That grows on yonder lee.'

38 'I will not yield to bush or brier,
Nor will I yield to thee;
But I will yield to Lord Douglas,
Or Sir Hugh Montgomery.'

39 When Piercy knew it was Sir Hugh,
He fell low on his knee,
But soon he raisd him up again,
Wi mickle courtesy.

40 He left not an Englishman on the field
. . . . . .
That he hadna either killd or taen
Ere his heart's blood was cauld.

CHEVY CHASE[3]

1 God prosper long our noble *king*,
our liffes and saftyes all!
A woefull hunting once there did
in Chevy Chase befall.

2 To drive the deere with hound and horne
Erle Pearcy took the way:
The child may rue *that* is unborne the
hunting of *that* day!

[2] fellow.

[3] Probably founded remotely on the same happening as *Otterburn*. This is the ballad that stirred Sir Philip Sidney in his *Defence of Poesie* to remark: "Certeinly I must confesse my own barbarousness. I never heard the olde song of Percy and Douglas that I found not my heart mooved more than with a trumpet; and yet it is sung but by some blind crouder [fiddler], with no rougher voyce then rude stile: which, being so evill apparrelled in the dust and cob-webbes of that uncivill age, what would it worke trymmed in the gorgeous eloquence of Pindar!" Addison's appreciation of it is in Nos. 70 and 74 of the *Spectator*.

3 The stout Erle of Northumberland
a vow to God did make
His pleasure in the Scottish woods
three sommers days to take,

4 The cheefest harts in Chevy C[h]ase
to kill and beare away:
These tydings to Erle Douglas came
in Scottland, where he lay.

5 Who sent Erle Pearcy present word
he would prevent his sport;
The English erle, not fearing that,
did to the woods resort,

6 With fifteen hundred bowmen bold,
All chosen men of might,
Who knew ffull well in time of neede
to ayme their shafts arright.

7 The gallant greyhound[s] swiftly ran
to chase the fallow deere;
On Munday they began to hunt,
ere daylight did appeare.

8 And long before high noone the had
a hundred fat buckes slaine;
Then having dined, the drovyers went
to rouze the deare againe.

9 The bowmen mustered on the hills,
well able to endure;
Theire backsids all with speciall care
that day were guarded sure.

10 The hounds ran swiftly through the woods
the nimble deere to take,
That with their cryes the hills and dales
an eccho shrill did make.

11 Lord Pearcy to the querry went
to veiw the tender deere;
Quoth he, 'Erle Douglas promised once
this day to meete me heere;

12 'But if I thought he wold not come,
noe longer wold I stay.'
With *that* a brave younge gentlman
thus to the erle did say:

13 'Loe, yonder doth Erle Douglas come,
hys men in armour bright;
Full twenty hundred Scottish speres
all marching in our sight.

14 'All men of pleasant Tivydale,
fast by the river Tweede:'
'O ceaze your sportts!' Erle Pearcy said,
'and take your bowes with speede.

15 'And now with me, my countrymen,
your courage forth advance!
For there was never champion yett,
in Scottland nor in Ffrance,

16 '*That* ever did on horsbacke come,
[but], and if my hap it were,
I durst encounter man for man,
with him to break a spere.'

17 Erle Douglas on his milke-white steede,
most like a baron bold,
Rode formost of his company,
whose armor shone like gold.

18 'Shew me,' sayd hee, 'whose men you bee
that hunt soe boldly heere,
That without my consent doe chase
and kill my fallow deere.'

19 The first man *that* did answer make
was noble Pearcy hee,
Who sayd, 'Wee list not to declare
nor shew whose men wee bee;

20 'Yett wee will spend our deerest blod
thy cheefest harts to slay.'
Then Douglas swore a solempne oathe,
and thus in rage did say:

21 'Ere thus I will outbraved bee,
one of us tow shall dye;
I know thee well, an erle thou art;
Lord Pearcy, soe am I.

22 'But trust me, Pearcye, pittye it were,
and great offence, to kill
Then any of these our guiltlesse men,
for they have done none ill.

23 'Let thou and I the battell trye,
and set our men aside:'
'Accurst bee [he!]' Erle Pearcye sayd,
'by whome it is denyed.'

24 Then stept a gallant squire forth—
Witherington was his name—
Who said, 'I wold not have it told
To Henery our *king*, for shame,

25 'That ere my captaine fought on foote,
and I stand looking on.
You bee two Erles,' quoth Witherington,
'and I a squier alone;

26 'I 'le doe the best that doe I may,
while I have power to stand;
While I have power to weeld my sword,
I 'le fight with hart and hand.'

27 Our English archers bent their bowes;
their harts were good and trew;
Att the first flight of arrowes sent,
full foure score Scotts the slew.

28 To drive the deere with hound and horne,
Dauglas bade on the bent;
Two captaines moved with mickle might,
their speres to shivers went.

29 They closed full fast on everye side,
noe slacknes there was found,
But many a gallant gentleman
lay gasping on the ground.

30 O Christ! it was great greeve to see
how eche man chose his spere,
And how the blood out of their brests
did gush like water cleare.

31 At last these two stout erles did meet,
like captaines of great might;
Like lyons woode [1] they layd on lode; [2]
the made a cruell fight.

32 The fought untill they both did sweat,
with swords of tempered steele,
Till blood downe their cheekes like raine
the trickling downe did feele.

33 'O yeeld thee, Pearcye!' Douglas sayd,
'And in faith I will thee bringe
Where thou shall high advanced bee
by Iames our Scottish king.

34 'Thy ransome I will freely give,
and this report of thee,
Thou art the most couragious knight
[that ever I did see.]'

35 'Noe, Douglas!' quoth Erle Percy then,
'thy profer I doe scorne;
I will not yeelde to any Scott
that ever yett was borne!'

36 With that there came an arrow keene,
out of an English bow,
Which stroke Erle Douglas on the brest
a deepe and deadlye blow.

37 Who never sayd more words than these;
'Fight on, my merry men all!
For why, my life is att [an] end,
lord Pearcy sees my fall.'

38 Then leaving liffe, Erle Pearcy tooke
the dead man by the hand;
Who said, 'Erle Dowglas, for thy life,
wold I had lost my land!

39 'O Christ! my verry hart doth bleed
for sorrow for thy sake,
For sure, a more redoubted knight
mischance cold [3] never take.'

40 A knight amongst the Scotts there was
which saw Erle Douglas dye,
Who streight in hart did vow revenge
upon the Lord Pearcye.

41 Sir Hugh Mountgomerye was he called,
who, with a spere full bright,
Well mounted on a gallant steed,
ran feircly through the fight,

42 And past the English archers all,
without all dread or feare,
And through Erle Percyes body then
he thrust his hatfull spere.

43 With such a vehement force and might
his body he did gore,
The staff ran through the other side
a large cloth-yard and more.

44 Thus did both those nobles dye,
whose courage none cold staine;
An English archer then perceived
the noble erle was slaine.

45 He had [a] good bow in his hand,
made of a trusty tree;
An arrow of a cloth-yard long
to the hard head haled hee.

[1] mad. [2] load, i.e., they laid on heartily. [3] could.

46 Against Sir Hugh Mountgomerye
his shaft full right he sett;
The grey-goose-winge *that* was there-on
in his harts bloode was wett.

47 This fight from breake of day did last
till setting of the sun,
For when the rung the evening-bell
the battele scarse was done.

48 With stout Erle Percy there was slaine
Sir Iohn of Egerton,
Sir Robert Harcliffe and Sir William,
Sir Iames, that bold barron.

49 And with Sir George and Sir Iames,
both knights of good account,
Good Sir Raphe Rebbye there was slaine,
whose prowesse did surmount.

50 For Witherington needs must I wayle
as one in dolefull dumpes,
For when his leggs were smitten of,
he fought upon his stumpes.

51 And with Erle Dowglas there was slaine
Sir Hugh Mountgomerye,
And Sir Charles Morrell, *that* from feelde
one foote wold never flee;

52 Sir Roger Hever of Harcliffe tow,
his sisters sonne was hee;
Sir David Lamwell, well esteemed,
but saved he cold not bee.

53 And the Lord Maxwell, in like case,
with Douglas he did dye;
Of twenty hundred Scottish speeres,
scarce fifty-five did flye.

54 Of fifteen hundred Englishmen
went home but fifty-three;
The rest in Chevy Chase were slaine,
under the greenwoode tree.

55 Next day did many widdowes come
their husbands to bewayle;
They washt their wounds in brinish teares,
but all wold not prevayle.

56 Theyr bodyes, bathed in purple blood,
the bore with them away;
They kist them dead a thousand times
ere the were cladd in clay.

57 The newes was brought to Eddenborrow,
where Scottlands king did rayne,
That brave Erle Douglas soddainlye
was with an arrow slaine.

58 'O heavy newes!' King Iames can say;
'Scottland may witnesse bee
I have not any captaine more
of such account as hee.'

59 Like tydings to King Henery came,
within as short a space,
That Pearcy of Northumberland
was slaine in Chevy Chase.

60 'Now God be with him!' said our king,
'sith it will noe better bee;
I trust I have within my realme
five hundred as good as hee.

61 'Yett shall not Scotts nor Scottland say
but I will vengeance take,
And be revenged on them all
for brave Erle Percyes sake.'

62 This vow the king did well performe
after on Humble-downe;
In one day fifty knights were slayne,
with lords of great renowne.

63 And of the rest, of small account,
did many hundreds dye:
Thus endeth the hunting in Chevy Chase,
made by the Erle Pearcye.

64 God save our king, and blesse this land
with plentye, ioy, and peace,
And grant henceforth *that* foule debate
twixt noble men may ceaze!

JOHNIE ARMSTRONG[1]

1 There dwelt a man in faire Westmerland,
Ionnë Armestrong men did him call,
He had nither lands nor rents coming in,
Yet he kept eight score men in his hall.

[1] This ballad is historical. In 1530 James V of Scotland cleaned up the Border, and among other outlaws hanged John Armstrong. This English version shifts Johnie's residence to Westmoreland.

2 He had horse and harness for them all,
Goodly steeds were all milke-white;
O the golden bands an about their necks,
And their weapons, they were all alike.

3 Newes then was brought unto the king
That there was sicke a won [1] as hee,
That livëd lyke a bold out-law,
And robbëd all the north country.

4 The king he writt an a letter then,
A letter which was large and long;
He signëd it with his owne hand,
And he promised to doe him no wrong.

5 When this letter came Ionnë untill,
His heart it was as blythe as birds on the tree:
'Never was I sent for before any king,
My father, my grandfather, nor none but mee.

6 'And if wee goe the king before,
I would we went most orderly;
Every man of you shall have his scarlet cloak,
Laced with silver laces three.

7 'Every won of you shall have his velvett coat,
Laced with sillver lace so white;
O the golden bands an about your necks,
Black hatts, white feathers, all alyke.'

8 By the morrow morninge at ten of the clock,
Towards Edenburough gon was hee,
And with him all his eight score men;
Good lord, it was a goodly sight for to see!

9 When Ionnë came befower the king,
He fell downe on his knee;
'O pardon, my soveraine leige,' he said,
'O pardon my eight score men and mee!'

10 'Thou shalt have no pardon, thou traytor strong,
For thy eight score men nor thee;
For to-morrow morning by ten of the clock,
Both thou and them shall hang on the gallow-tree.'

[1] such a one.

11 But Ionnë looke'd over his left shoulder,
Good Lord, what a grevious look looked hee!
Saying, 'Asking grace of a graceles face —
Why there is none for you nor me.'

12 But Ionnë had a bright sword by his side
And it was made of the mettle so free,
That had not the king stept his foot aside,
He had smitten his head from his faire boddë.

13 Saying, 'Fight on, my merry men all,
And see that none of you be taine;
For rather than men shall say we were hange'd,
Let them report how we were slaine.'

14 Then, God wott, faire Eddenburrough rose,
And so besett poore Ionnë rounde,
That fowerscore and tenn of Ionnes best men
Lay gasping all upon the ground.

15 Then like a mad man Ionnë laide about,
And like a mad man then fought hee,
Untill a falce Scott came Ionnë behinde,
And runn him through the faire boddee.

16 Saying, 'Fight on, my merry men all,
And see that none of you be taine;
For I will stand by and bleed but awhile,
And then will I come and fight againe.'

17 Newes then was brought to young Ionnë Armestrong,
As he stood by his nurses knee,
Who vowed if ere he live'd for to be a man,
O the treacherous Scots revengd hee 'd be.

MARY HAMILTON [2]

1 Word 's gane to the kitchen,
And word 's gane to the ha,
That Marie Hamilton gangs wi bairn
To the hichest Stewart of a'.

[2] There may be some slight historical foundation to this famous ballad. See the discussion by Child, III, 381, and Andrew Lang, *Blackwood's Magazine*, Sept. 1, 1895, p. 381. This version, the oldest, was first printed in 1824.

2 He 's courted her in the kitchen,
He 's courted her in the ha,
He 's courted her in the laigh[1] cellar,
And that was warst of a'.

3 She 's tyed it in her apron
And she 's thrown it in the sea;
Says, 'Sink ye, swim ye, bonny wee babe!
You 'l neer get mair o me.'

4 Down then cam the auld queen,
Goud tassels tying her hair:
'O Marie, where 's the bonny wee babe
That I heard greet sae sair?'

5 'There was never a babe intill my room,
As little designs to be;
It was but a touch o my sair side,
Come oer my fair bodie.'

6 'O Marie, put on your robes o black,
Or else your robes o brown,
For ye maun gang wi me the night,
To see fair Edinbro town.'

7 'I winna put on my robes o black,
Nor yet my robes o brown;
But I 'll put on my robes o white,
To shine through Edinbro town.'

8 When she gaed up the Cannogate,
She laughd loud laughters three;
But whan she cam down the Cannogate
The tear blinded her ee.

9 When she gaed up the Parliament stair,
The heel cam aff her shee;
And lang or she cam down again
She was condemnd to dee.

10 When she cam down the Cannogate,
The Cannogate sae free,
Many a ladie lookd oer her window,
Weeping for this ladie.

11 'Ye need nae weep for me,' she says,
'Ye need nae weep for me;
For had I not slain mine own sweet babe,
This death I wadna dee.

12 'Bring me a bottle of wine,' she says,
'The best that eer ye hae,
That I may drink to my weil-wishers,
And they may drink to me.

[1] low.

13 'Here 's a health to the jolly sailors,
That sail upon the main;
Let them never let on to my father and mother
But what I 'm coming hame.

14 'Here 's a health to the jolly sailors,
That sail upon the sea;
Let them never let on to my father and mother
That I cam here to dee.

15 'Oh little did my mother think,
The day she cradled me,
What lands I was to travel through,
What death I was to dee.

16 'Oh little did my father think,
The day he held up me,
What lands I was to travel through,
What death I was to dee.

17 'Last night I washd the queen's feet,
And gently laid her down;
And a' the thanks I 've gotten the nicht
To be hangd in Edinbro town!

18 'Last nicht there was four Maries,
The nicht there 'l be but three;
There was Marie Seton, and Marie Beton,
And Marie Carmichael, and me.'

CAPTAIN CAR[2]

1 It befell at Martynmas,
When wether waxed colde,
Captaine Care said to his men,
We must go take a holde.

Syck, sike, and to-towe sike,[3]
And sike and like to die;
The sikest nighte that ever I abode,
God lord have mercy on me!

2 'Haille, master, and wether[4] you will,
And wether ye like it best';
'To the castle of Crecrynbroghe,
And there we will take our reste.'

[2] Also called *Edom o Gordon* from the historical original, Adam Gordon, who in 1571 as deputy-lieutenant for Mary Queen of Scots thus burnt the Forbes (not Hamilton) hold of Towie.

[3] too too sick.

[4] whither.

3 'I knowe wher is a gay castle,
Is builded of lyme and stone;
Within their is a gay ladie,
Her lord is riden and gone.'

4 The ladie she lend on her castle-walle,
She loked upp and downe;
There was she ware of an host of men,
Come riding to the towne.

5 'Se yow, my meri men all,
And se yow what I see?
Yonder I see a host of men,
I muse who they bee.'

6 She thought he had ben her wed lord,
As he comd riding home;
Then was it traitur Captaine Care,
The lord of Ester-towne.

7 They wer no soner at supper sett,
Then after said the grace,
Or Captaine Care and all his men
Wer lighte aboute the place.

8 'Gyve ouer thi howsse, thou lady gay,
And I will make the a bande;[1]
To-nighte thou shall ly within my armes,
To-morrowe thou shall ere[2] my lande.'

9 Then bespacke the eldest sonne,
That was both whitt and redde:
'O mother dere, geve over *your* howsse,
Or elles we shalbe deade.'

10 'I will not geve over my hous,' she saithe,
'Not for feare of my lyffe;
It shalbe talked throughout the land,
The slaughter of a wyffe.

11 'Fetch me my pestilett,[3]
And charge me my gonne,
That I may shott at yonder bloddy butcher,
The lord of Easter-towne.'

12 Styfly vpon her wall she stode,
And lett the pellettes flee;
But then she myst the blody bucher,
And she slew other three.

13 '[I will] not geve over my hous,' she saithe,
'Netheir for lord nor lowne;
Nor yet for traitour Captaine Care,
The lord of Easter-towne.

14 'I desire of Captine Care,
And all his bloddye band,
That he would save my eldest sonne,
The eare of all my lande.'

15 'Lap him in a shete,' he sayth,
'And let him downe to me,
And I shall take him in my armes,
His waran[4] shall I be.'

16 The captayne sayd unto him selfe:
Wyth sped, before the rest,
He cut his tonge out of his head,
His hart out of his brest.

17 He lapt them in a handkerchef,
And knet it of knotes three,
And cast them over the castell-wall,
At that gay ladye.

18 'Fye vpon the, Captayne Care,
And all thy bloddy band!
For thou hast slayne my eldest sonne,
The ayre of all my land.'

19 Then bespake the yongest sonne,
That sat on the nurses knee,
Sayth, 'Mother gay, geve over your house;
It smoldereth me.'

20 'I wold geve my gold,' she saith,
'And so I wolde my ffee,
For a blaste of the westryn wind,
To dryve the smoke from thee.

21 'Fy vpon the, John Hamleton,
That ever I paid the hyre!
For thou hast broken my castle-wall,
And kyndled in the ffyre.'

22 The lady gate[5] to her close parler,
The fire fell aboute her head;
She toke vp her children thre,
Seth, 'Babes, we are all dead.'

23 Then bespake the hye steward,
That is of hye degree;
Saith, 'Ladie gay, you are in close,[6]
Wether ye fighte or flee.'

24 Lord Hamleton dremd in his dream,
In Carvall where he laye,
His halle were all of fyre,
His ladie slayne or daye.[7]

[1] compact. [2] inherit. [3] pistolet. [4] warrant. [5] got, went. [6] enclosed. [7] before day.

25 'Busk and bowne,[1] my mery men all,
Even and go ye with me;
For I dremd that my haal was on fyre,
My lady slayne or day.'

26 He buskt him and bownd hym,
And like a worthi knighte;
And when he saw his hall burning,
His harte was no dele lighte.

27 He sett a trumpett till his mouth,
He blew as it plesd his grace;
Twenty score of Hamlentons
Was light aboute the place.

28 'Had I knowne as much yesternighte
As I do to-daye,
Captaine Care and all his men
Should not have gone so quite.

29 'Fye vpon the, Captaine Care,
And all thy blody bande!
Thou haste slayne my lady gay,
More wurth then all thy lande.

30 'If thou had ought[2] eny ill will,' he saith,
'Thou shoulde have taken my lyffe,
And have saved my children thre,
All and my lovesome wyffe.'

THE BONNY EARL OF MURRAY[3]

1 Ye Highlands, and ye Lawlands,
Oh where have you been?
They have slain the Earl of Murray,
And they layd him on the green.

2 'Now wae be to thee, Huntly!
And wherefore did you sae?
I bade you bring him wi you,
But forbade you him to slay.'

3 He was a braw gallant,
And he rid at the ring;
And the bonny Earl of Murray,
Oh he might have been a king!

4 He was a braw gallant,
And he playd at the ba;
And the bonny Earl of Murray
Was the flower amang them a'.

5 He was a braw gallant,
And he playd at the glove;
And the bonny Earl of Murray,
Oh he was the Queen's love!

6 Oh lang will his lady
Look oer the castle Down,
Eer she see the Earl of Murray
Come sounding thro the town!
Eer she, etc.

KINMONT WILLIE[4]

1 O have ye na heard o the fause Sakelde?
O have ye na heard o the keen Lord Scroop?
How they hae taen bauld Kinmont Willie,
On Hairibee to hang him up?

2 Had Willie had but twenty men,
But twenty men as stout as he,
Fause Sakelde had never the Kinmont taen,
Wi eight score in his companie.

3 They band his legs beneath the steed,
They tied his hands behind his back;
They guarded him, fivesome on each side,
And they brought him ower the Liddel-rack.

4 They led him thro the Liddel-rack,
And also thro the Carlisle sands;
They brought him to Carlisle castell,
To be at my Lord Scroope's commands.

5 'My hands are tied, but my tongue is free,
And whae will dare this deed avow?
Or answer by the border law?
Or answer to the bauld Buccleuch?'

6 'Now haud thy tongue, thou rank reiver![5]
There 's never a Scot shall set ye free;
Before ye cross my castle-yate,
I trow ye shall take farewell o me.'

[1] Arm and prepare. [2] owed.
[3] The handsome James Stewart, Earl of Murray, was slain in 1592.

[4] This ballad, founded on actual events of about 1596, has been much touched up by Sir Walter Scott.
[5] robber.

7 'Fear na ye that, my lord,' quo Willie;
'By the faith o my bodie, Lord Scroop,' he said,
'I never yet lodged in a hostelrie
But I paid my lawing [1] before I gaed.'

8 Now word is gane to the bauld Keeper,
In Branksome Ha [2] where that he lay,
That Lord Scroope has taen the Kinmont Willie,
Between the hours of night and day.

9 He has taen the table wi his hand,
He garrd the red wine spring on hie;
'Now Christ's curse on my head,' he said,
'But avenged of Lord Scroop I 'll be!

10 'O is my basnet [3] a widow's curch? [4]
Or my lance a wand of the willow-tree?
Or my arm a ladye's lilye hand?
That an English lord should lightly [5] me.

11 'And have they taen him Kinmont Willie,
Against the truce of Border tide,
And forgotten that the bauld Bacleuch
Is keeper here on the Scottish side?

12 'And have they een taen him Kinmont Willie,
Withouten either dread or fear,
And forgotten that the bauld Bacleuch
Can back a steed, or shake a spear?

13 'O were there war between the lands,
As well I wot that there is none,
I would slight [6] Carlisle castell high,
Tho it were builded of marble-stone.

14 'I would set that castell in a low,[7]
And sloken [8] it with English blood;
There 's nevir a man in Cumberland
Should ken where Carlisle castell stood.

15 'But since nae war 's between the lands,
And there is peace, and peace should be,
I 'll neither harm English lad or lass,
And yet the Kinmont freed shall be!'

16 He has calld him forty marchmen bauld,
I trow they were of his ain name,
Except Sir Gilbert Elliot, calld
The Laird of Stobs, I mean the same.

17 He has calld him forty marchmen bauld,
Were kinsmen to the bauld Buccleuch,
With spur on heel, and splent on spauld,[9]
And gleuves of green, and feathers blue.

18 There were five and five before them a',
Wi hunting-horns and bugles bright;
And five and five came wi Buccleuch,
Like Warden's men, arrayed for fight.

19 And five and five like a mason-gang,
That carried the ladders lang and hie;
And five and five like broken men;[10]
And so they reached the Woodhouselee.

20 And as we crossed the Bateable Land,
When to the English side we held,
The first o men that we met wi,
Whae sould it be but fause Sakelde!

21 'Where be ye gaun, ye hunters keen?'
Quo fause Sakelde; 'come tell to me!'
'We go to hunt an English stag,
Has trespassd on the Scots countrie.'

22 'Where be ye gaun, ye marshal-men?'
Quo fause Sakelde; 'come tell to me true!'
'We go to catch a rank reiver,
Has broken faith wi the bauld Buccleuch.'

23 'Where are ye gaun, ye mason-lads,
Why a' your ladders lang and hie?'
'We gang to herry [11] a corbie's nest,
That wons [12] not far frae Woodhouselee.'

24 'Where be ye gaun, ye broken men?'
Quo fause Sakelde; 'come tell to me!'
Now Dickie of Dryhope led that band,
And the never a word o lear [13] had he.

[1] reckoning. [2] Hall. [3] helmet. [4] kerchief, headdress. [5] scorn. [6] destroy. [7] flame. [8] quench. [9] armor on shoulder. [10] outlaws. [11] harry, rob. [12] dwells. [13] learning, instruction.

25 'Why trespass ye on the English side?
Row[1]-footed outlaws, stand!' quo he;
The neer a word had Dickie to say,
Sae he thrust the lance thro his faulse bodie.

26 Then on we held for Carlisle toun,
And at Staneshaw-bank the Eden we crossd;
The water was great, and meikle of spait,[2]
But the nevir a horse nor man we lost.

27 And when we reached the Staneshaw-bank,
The wind was rising loud and hie;
And there the laird garrd[3] leave our steeds,
For fear that they should stamp and nie.

28 And when we left the Staneshaw-bank,
The wind began full loud to blaw;
But 't was wind and weet, and fire and sleet,
When we came beneath the castelwa.

29 We crept on knees, and held our breath,
Till we placed the ladders against the wa;
And sae ready was Buccleuch himsell
To mount the first before us a'.

30 He has taen the watchman by the throat,
He flung him down upon the lead:
'Had there not been peace between our lands,
Upon the other side thou hadst gaed.

31 'Now sound out, trumpets!' quo Buccleuch;
'Let 's waken Lord Scroope right merrilie!'
Then loud the Warden's trumpets blew
'O whae dare meddle wi me?'

32 Then speedilie to wark we gaed,
And raised the slogan ane and a',
And cut a hole thro a sheet of lead,
And so we wan to the castel-ha.

33 They thought King James and a' his men
Had won the house wi bow and speir:
It was but twenty Scots and ten
That put a thousand in sic a stear![4]

34 Wi coulters[5] and wi forehammers,
We garrd the bars bang merrilie,
Untill we came to the inner prison,
Where Willie o Kinmont he did lie.

35 And when we cam to the lower prison,
Where Willie o Kinmont he did lie,
'O sleep ye, wake ye, Kinmont Willie,
Upon the morn that thou 's to die?'

36 'O I sleep saft, and I wake aft,
It 's lang since sleeping was fleyd[6] frae me;
Gie my service back to my wyfe and bairns,
And a' gude fellows that speer[7] for me.'

37 Then Red Rowan has hente[8] him up,
The starkest man in Teviotdale:
'Abide, abide now, Red Rowan,
Till of my Lord Scroope I take farewell.

38 'Farewell, farewell, my gude Lord Scroope!
My gude Lord Scroope, farewell!' he cried;
'I 'll pay you for my lodging-maill[9]
When first we meet on the border-side.'

39 Then shoulder high, with shout and cry,
We bore him down the ladder lang;
At every stride Red Rowan made,
I wot the Kinmont's airns[10] playd clang.

40 'O mony a time,' quo Kinmont Willie,
'I have ridden horse baith wild and wood;[11]
But a rougher beast than Red Rowan
I ween my legs have neer bestrode.

41 'And mony a time,' quo Kinmont Willie,
'I 've pricked a horse out oure the furs;[12]
But since the day I backed a steed
I nevir wore sic cumbrous spurs.'

[1] Rough. [2] in high flood. [3] caused us to. [4] stir. [5] the blade before the share of a plough. [6] frightened. [7] inquire. [8] taken. [9] rent. [10] irons. [11] mad. [12] over the furrows.

42 We scarce had won the Staneshaw-bank,
When a' the Carlisle bells were rung,
And a thousand men, in horse and foot,
Cam wi the keen Lord Scroope along.

43 Buccleuch has turned to Eden Water,
Even where it flowd frae bank to brim,
And he has plunged in wi a' his band,
And safely swam them thro the stream.

44 He turned him on the other side,
And at Lord Scroope his glove flung he:
'If ye like na my visit in merry England,
In fair Scotland come visit me!'

45 All sore astonished stood Lord Scroope,
He stood as still as rock of stane;
He scarcely dared to trew[1] his eyes
When thro the water they had gane.

46 'He is either himsell a devil frae hell,
Or else his mother a witch maun be;
I wad na have ridden that wan water
For a' the gowd in Christentie.'

THE BONNIE HOUSE O AIRLIE[2]

1 It fell on a day, and a bonny summer day,
When corn grew green and yellow,
That there fell out a great dispute
Between Argyll and Airly.

2 Argyll has raisd an hundred men,
An hundred men, and so many,
And he is away by the back of Dunkeld,
For to plunder the bonny house of Airly.

3 Lady Margaret looks oer her bower-window,
And O but she looks weary!
And there she spied the great Argyll,
Coming to plunder the bonny house of Airly.

4 'Come down, come down, Lady Margret,' he said,
'Come down, and kiss me fairly:'
'O I will not kiss the great Argyll,
If he should not leave a standing stone in Airly.'

5 He hath taken her by the left shoulder,
Says, 'Lady, where lyes thy dowry?'
'It's up and it's down by the bonny bank-side,
Amongst the planting of Airly.'

6 They have sought it up, they have sought it down,
They have sought it both late and early,
And they have found it in the bonny plumb-tree
That shines on the bowling-green of Airly.

7 He hath taken her by the middle so small,
And O but she lookd weary!
He hath laid her down by the bonny burn-side,
Till he hath plundered the bonny house of Airly.

8 'If my good lord were at home this night,
As he is with Prince Charly,
Nouther you nor no Scottish lord
Durst have set a foot on the bowling-green of Airly.

9 'Ten bonny sons I have born unto him,
The eleventh neer saw his daddy;
Although I had an hundred more,
I would give them all to Prince Charly.'

THE BARON OF BRACKLEY[3]

1 Inverey cam doun Deeside, whistlin and playin,
He was at brave Braikley's yett[4] ere it was dawin.[5]

2 He rappit fu loudly an wi a great roar,
Cried, 'Cum doun, cum doun, Braikley, and open the door.

[1] trust.
[2] The Earl of Argyle sacked and burnt Airlie in 1640.
[3] Various tragedies in the history of the Brackley family have supplied the material for this.
[4] gate.
[5] dawning.

3 'Are ye sleepin, Baronne, or are ye wakin?
There 's sharpe swords at your yett, will gar your blood spin.

4 'Open the yett, Braikley, and lat us within,
Till we on the green turf gar your bluid rin.'

5 Out spak the brave baronne, owre the castell-wa:
'Are ye cum to spulyie [1] and plunder mi ha?

6 'But gin ye be gentlemen, licht and cum in:
Gin ye drink o my wine, ye 'll nae gar [2] my bluid spin.

7 'Gin ye be hir'd widifus,[3] ye may gang by,
Ye may gang to the lawlands and steal their fat ky.[4]

8 'Ther spulyie like rievers o wyld ket-trin clan,[5]
Who plunder unsparing baith houses and lan.

9 'Gin ye be gentlemen, licht an cum [in],
Ther 's meat an drink i my ha for every man.

10 'Gin ye be hir'd widifus, ye may gang by,
Gang doun to the lawlands, and steal horse and ky.'

11 Up spak his ladie, at his bak where she lay,
'Get up, get up, Braikley, and be not afraid;
The 'r but young hir'd widifus wi belted plaids.'

12 'Cum kiss me, mi Peggy, I 'le nae langer stay,
For I will go out and meet Inverey.

13 'But haud your tongue, Peggy, and mak nae sic din,
For yon same hir'd widifus will prove themselves men.'

14 She called on her marys,[6] they cam to her hand;
Cries, 'Bring me your rocks,[7] lassies, we will them command.

15 'Get up, get up, Braikley, and turn bak your ky,
Or me an mi women will them defy.

16 'Cum forth then, mi maidens, and show them some play;
We 'll ficht them, and shortly the cowards will fly.

17 'Gin I had a husband, whereas I hae nane,
He woud nae ly i his bed and see his ky taen.

18 'Ther 's four-and-twenty milk-whit calves, twal [8] o them ky,
In the woods o Glentanner, it 's ther thei a' ly.

19 'Ther 's goat i the Etnach, and sheep o the brae,
Ana' will be plunderd by young Inverey.'

20 'Now haud your tongue, Peggy, and gie me a gun,
Ye 'll see me gae furth, but I 'll never cum in.

21 'Call mi brother William, mi unkl also,
Mi cousin James Gordon; we 'll mount and we 'll go.'

22 When Braikley was ready and stood i the closs,
He was the bravest baronne that eer mounted horse.

23 When all wer assembld o the castell green,
No man like brave Braikley was ther to be seen.

24 . . . . . .
'Turn bak, brother William, ye are a bridegroom;

25 'Wi bonnie Jean Gordon, the maid o the mill;
O sichin [9] and sobbin she 'll soon get her fill.'

[1] spoil. [2] make. [3] gallows-birds. [4] kine.
[5] steal like thieves of the wild robber clans.
[6] maids. [7] distaffs. [8] twelve. [9] sighing.

26 'I 'm no coward, brother, 't is kend I 'm a man;
I 'll ficht i your quarral as lang 's I can stand.

27 'I 'll ficht, my dear brother, wi heart and gude will,
And so will young Harry that lives at the mill.

28 'But turn, mi dear brother, and nae langer stay:
What 'll cum o your ladie, gin Braikley thei slay?

29 'What 'll cum o your ladie and bonnie young son?
O what 'll cum o them when Braikley is gone?'

30 'I never will turn: do you think I will fly?
But here I will ficht, and here I will die.'

31 'Strik dogs,' crys Inverey, 'and ficht till ye 're slayn,
For we are four hundered, ye are but four men.

32 'Strik, strik, ye proud boaster, your honour is gone,
Your lands we will plunder, your castell we 'll burn.'

33 At the head o the Etnach the battel began,
At Little Auchoilzie thei killd the first man.

34 First thei killd ane, and soon they killd twa,
Thei killd gallant Braikley, the flour o them a'.

35 Thei killd William Gordon, and James o the Knox,
And brave Alexander, the flour o Glenmuick.

36 What sichin and moaning was heard i the glen,
For the Baronne o Braikley, who basely was slayn!

37 'Cam ye bi the castell, and was ye in there?
Saw ye pretty Peggy tearing her hair?'

38 'Yes, I cam by Braikley, and I gaed in there,
And there [saw] his ladie braiding her hair.

39 'She was rantin, and dancin, and singin for joy,
And vowin that nicht she woud feest Inverey.

40 'She eat wi him, drank wi him, welcomd him in,
Was kind to the man that had slayn her baronne.'

41 Up spake the son on the nourice's knee,
'Gin I live to be a man, revenged I 'll be.'

42 Ther 's dool i the kitchin, and mirth i the ha,
The Baronne o Braikley is dead and awa.

BONNIE GEORGE CAMPBELL

1 Hie upon Hielands,
and laigh[1] upon Tay,
Bonnie George Campbell
rode out on a day.

2 He saddled, he bridled,
and gallant rode he,
And hame cam his guid horse,
but never cam he.

3 Out came his mother dear,
greeting fu sair,[2]
And out cam his bonnie bryde,
riving her hair.

4 'The meadow lies green,
the corn is unshorn,
But Bonnie George Campbell
will never return.'

5 Saddled and bridled
and booted rode he,
A plume in his helmet,
a sword at his knee.

6 But toom[3] cam his saddle,
all bloody to see,
Oh, hame cam his guid horse,
but never cam he!

[1] low. [2] Weeping full sore. [3] empty.

BEWICK AND GRAHAM[1]

1 Old Grahame [he] is to Carlisle gone,
Where Sir Robert Bewick there met he;
In arms to the wine they are gone,
And drank till they were both merry.

2 Old Grahame he took up the cup,
And said, 'Brother Bewick, here 's to thee;
And here 's to our two sons at home,
For they live best in our country.'

3 'Nay, were thy son as good as mine,
And of some books he could but read,
With sword and buckler by his side,
To see how he could save his head,

4 'They might have been calld two bold brethren
Where ever they did go or ride;
They might [have] been calld two bold brethren,
They might have crackd the Border-side.

5 'Thy son is bad, and is but a lad,
And bully[2] to my son cannot be;
For my son Bewick can both write and read,
And sure I am that cannot he.'

6 'I put him to school, but he would not learn,
I bought him books, but he would not read;
But my blessing he 's never have
Till I see how his hand can save his head.'

7 Old Grahame called for an account,
And he askd what was for to pay;
There he paid a crown, so it went round,
Which was all for good wine and hay.

8 Old Grahame is into the stable gone,
Where stood thirty good steeds and three;
He 's taken his own steed by the head,
And home rode he right wantonly.

9 When he came home, there did he espy,
A loving sight to spy or see,
There did he espy his own three sons,
Young Christy Grahame, the foremost was he.

10 There did he espy his own three sons,
Young Christy Grahame, the foremost was he:
'Where have you been all day, father,
That no counsel you would take by me?'

11 'Nay, I have been in Carlisle town,
Where Sir Robert Bewick there met me;
He said thou was bad, and calld thee a lad,
And a baffled man by thou I be.

12 'He said thou was bad, and calld thee lad,
And bully to his son cannot be;
For his son Bewick can both write and read,
And sure I am that cannot thee.

13 'I put thee to school, but thou would not learn,
I bought thee books, but thou would not read;
But my blessing thou 's never have
Till I see with Bewick thou can save thy head.'

14 'Oh, pray forbear, my father dear;
That ever such a thing should be!
Shall I venture my body in field to fight
With a man that 's faith and troth to me?'

15 'What 's that thou sayst, thou limmer[3] loon?
Or how dare thou stand to speak to me?
If thou do not end this quarrel soon,
Here is my glove thou shalt fight me.'

16 Christy stoopd low unto the ground,
Unto the ground, as you 'll understand:
'O father, put on your glove again,
The wind hath blown it from your hand.'

[1] In spite of incongruous touches in the spirit of the eighteenth century — the date of the oldest copy — this is a proper ballad.

[2] brother-in-arms.

[3] rascally.

17 'What's that thou sayst, thou limmer loon?
Or how dare thou stand to speak to me?
If thou do not end this quarrel soon,
Here is my hand thou shalt fight me.'

18 Christy Grahame is to his chamber gone,
And for to study, as well might be,
Whether to fight with his father dear,
Or with his bully Bewick he.

19 'If it be [my] fortune my bully to kill,
As you shall boldly understand,
In every town that I ride through,
They 'll say, There rides a brotherless man!

20 'Nay, for to kill my bully dear,
I think it will be a deadly sin;
And for to kill my father dear,
The blessing of heaven I neer shall win.

21 'O give me your blessing, father,' he said,
'And pray well for me for to thrive;
If it be my fortune my bully to kill,
I swear I 'll neer come home alive.'

22 He put on his back a good plate-jack,
And on his head a cap of steel,
With sword and buckler by his side;
O gin[1] he did not become them well!

23 'O fare thee well, my father dear!
And fare thee well, thou Carlisle town!
If it be my fortune my bully to kill,
I swear I 'll neer eat bread again.'

24 Now we 'll leave talking of Christy Grahame,
And talk of him again belive;[2]
But we will talk of bonny Bewick,
Where he was teaching his scholars five.

25 Now when he had learned them well to fence,
To handle their swords without any doubt,
He 's taken his own sword under his arm,
And walkd his father's close about.

26 He lookd between him and the sun,
To see what farleys[3] he could see;
There he spy'd a man with armour on,
As he came riding over the lee.

27 'I wonder much what man yon be
That so boldly this way does come;
I think it is my nighest friend,
I think it is my bully Grahame.

28 'O welcome, O welcome, bully Grahame!
O man, thou art my dear, welcome!
O man, thou art my dear, welcome!
For I love thee best in Christendom.'

29 'Away, away, O bully Bewick,
And of thy bullyship let me be!
The day is come I never thought on;
Bully, I 'm come here to fight with thee.'

30 'O no! not so, O bully Grahame!
That eer such a word should spoken be!
I was thy master, thou was my scholar:
So well as I have learnëd thee.'

31 'My father he was in Carlisle town,
Where thy father Bewick there met he;
He said I was bad, and he calld me a lad,
And a baffled man by thou I be.'

32 'Away, away, O bully Grahame,
And of all that talk, man, let us be!
We 'll take three men of either side
To see if we can our fathers agree.'

33 'Away, away, O bully Bewick,
And of thy bullyship let me be!
But if thou be a man, as I trow thou art,
Come overt his ditch and fight with me.'

34 'O no! not so, my bully Grahame!
That eer such a word should spoken be!
Shall I venture my body in field to fight
With a man that 's faith and troth to me?'

35 'Away, away, O bully Bewick,
And of all that care, man, let us be!
If thou be a man, as I trow thou art,
Come over this ditch and fight with me.'

[1] if. [2] soon. [3] strange sights.

36 'Now, if it be my fortune thee, Grahame, to kill,
As God's will 's, man, it all must be;
But if it be my fortune thee, Grahame, to kill,
'T is home again I 'll never gae.'

37 'Thou art of my mind then, bully Bewick,
And sworn-brethren will we be;
If thou be a man, as I trow thou art,
Come over this ditch and fight with me.'

38 He flang his cloak from [off] his shoulders,
His psalm-book out of his hand flang he,
He clapd his hand upon the hedge,
And oer lap he right wantonly.

39 When Grahame did see his bully come,
The salt tear stood long in his eye:
'Now needs must I say that thou art a man,
That dare venture thy body to fight with me.

40 'Now I have a harness on my back;
I know that thou hath none on thine;
But as little as thou hath on thy back,
Sure as little shall there be on mine.'

41 He flang his jack from off his back,
His steel cap from his head flang he;
He 's taken his sword into his hand,
He 's tyed his horse unto a tree.

42 Now they fell to it with two broa[d swords],
For two long hours fought Bewick [and he];
Much sweat was to be seen on them both,
But never a drop of blood to see.

43 Now Grahame gave Bewick an ackward[1] stroke,
An ackward stroke surely struck he;
He struck him now under the left breast,
Then down to the ground as dead fell he.

[1] awkward, backhand.

44 'Arise, arise, O bully Bewick,
Arise, and speak three words to me!
Whether this be thy deadly wound,
Or God and good surgeons will mend thee.'

45 'O horse, O horse, O bully Grahame,
And pray do get thee far from me!
Thy sword is sharp, it hath wounded my heart,
And so no further can I gae.

46 'O horse, O horse, O bully Grahame,
And get thee far from me with speed!
And get thee out of this country quite!
That none may know who 's done the deed.'

47 'O if this be true, my bully dear,
The words that thou dost tell to me,
The vow I made, and the vow I 'll keep;
I swear I 'll be the first that die.'

48 Then he stuck his sword in a moody-hill,[2]
Where he lap thirty good foot and three;
First he bequeathed his soul to God,
And upon his own sword-point lap he.

49 Now Grahame he was the first that died,
And then came Robin Bewick to see;
'Arise, arise, O son!' he said,
'For I see thou 's won the victory.

50 'Arise, arise, O son!' he said,
'For I see thou 's won the victory:'
[Father, co]uld ye not drunk your wine at home,
[And le]tten me and my brother be?

51 'Nay, dig a grave both low and wide,
And in it us two pray bury;
But bury my bully Grahame on the sunside,
For I 'm sure he won the victory.'

52 Now we 'll leave talking of these two brethren,
In Carlisle town where they lie slain,
And talk of these two good old men,
Where they were making a pitiful moan.

[2] mole-hill.

53 With that bespoke now Robin Bewick:
'O man was I not much to blame?
I have lost one of the liveliest lads
That ever was bred unto my name.'

54 With that bespoke my good lord Grahame:
'O man, I have lost the better block;
I have lost my comfort and my joy,
I have lost my key, I have lost my lock.

55 'Had I gone through all Ladderdale,
And forty horse had set on me,
Had Christy Grahame been at my back,
So well as he woud guarded me.'

56 I have no more of my song to sing,
But two or three words to you I 'll name;
But 't will be talk'd in Carlisle town
That these two [old] men were all the blame.

THE DOWY HOUMS O YARROW[1]

1 Late at een, drinkin the wine,
Or early in a mornin,
The set a combat them between,
To fight it in the dawnin.

2 'O stay at hame, my noble lord!
O stay at hame, my marrow![2]
My cruel brother will you betray,
On the dowy houms o Yarrow.'

3 'O fare ye weel, my lady gaye!
O fare ye weel, my Sarah!
For I maun gae, tho I neer return
Frae the dowy banks o Yarrow.'

4 She kissed his cheek, she kaimd his hair,
As she had done before, O;
She belted on his noble brand,
An he 's awa to Yarrow.

5 O he 's gane up yon high, high hill —
I wat he gaed wi sorrow —
And in a den spied nine armd men,
I the dowy houms o Yarrow.

6 'O ir[4] ye come to drink the wine,
As ye hae doon before, O?
Or ir ye com to wield the brand,
On the bonny banks o Yarrow?'

7 'I im no come to drink the wine,
As I hae don before, O,
But I im come to wield the brand,
On the dowy houms o Yarrow.'

8 Four he hurt, an five he slew,
On the dowy houms o Yarrow,
Till that stubborn knight came him behind,
An ran his body thorrow.

9 'Gae hame, gae hame, good-brother John,
An tell your sister Sarah
To come an lift her noble lord,
Who 's sleepin sound on Yarrow.'

10 'Yestreen I dreamd a dolefu dream;
I kend[5] there wad be sorrow;
I dreamd I pu'd the heather green,
On the dowy banks o Yarrow.'

11 She gaed up yon high, high hill —
I wat she gaed wi sorrow —
An in a den spy'd nine dead men,
On the dowy houms o Yarrow.

12 She kissed his cheek, she kaimed his hair,
As oft she did before, O;
She drank the red blood frae him ran,
On the dowy houms o Yarrow.

13 'O haud your tongue, my douchter dear,
For what needs a' this sorrow?
I 'll wed you on a better lord
Than him you lost on Yarrow.'

14 'O haud your tongue, my father dear,
And dinna grieve your Sarah;
A better lord was never born
Than him I lost on Yarrow.

15 'Tak hame your ousen,[6] take hame your kye,[7]
For they hae bred our sorrow;
I wiss[8] that they had a' gane mad
Whan they cam first to Yarrow.'

[1] The doleful banks of Yarrow. Also called *The Braes of Yarrow.*
[2] sweetheart.
[4] are. [5] knew. [6] oxen. [7] kine. [8] wish.

THE DÆMON LOVER[1]

1 'O WHERE have you been, my long, long love,
This long seven years and mair?'
'O I'm come to seek my former vows
Ye granted me before.'

2 'O hold your tongue of your former vows,
For they will breed sad strife;
O hold your tongue of your former vows,
For I am become a wife.'

3 He turned him right and round about,
And the tear blinded his ee:
'I wad never hae trodden on Irish ground,
If it had not been for thee.

4 'I might hae had a king's daughter,
Far, far beyond the sea;
I might have had a king's daughter,
Had it not been for love o thee.'

5 'If ye might have had a king's daughter,
Yer sel ye had to blame;
Ye might have taken the king's daughter,
For ye kend that I was nane.

6 'If I was to leave my husband dear,
And my two babes also,
O what have you to take me to,
If with you I should go?'

7 'I hae seven ships upon the sea —
The eighth brought me to land —
With four-and-twenty bold mariners,
And music on every hand.'

8 She has taken up her two little babes,
Kissd them baith cheek and chin:
'O fair ye weel, my ain two babes,
For I'll never see you again.'

9 She set her foot upon the ship,
No mariners could she behold;
But the sails were o the taffetie,
And the masts o the beaten gold.

10 She had not sailed a league, a league,
A league but barely three,
When dismal grew his countenance,
And drumlie[2] grew his ee.

11 They had not saild a league, a league,
A league but barely three,
Until she espied his cloven foot,
And she wept right bitterlie.

12 'O hold your tongue of your weeping,' says he,
'Of your weeping now let me be;
I will shew you how the lilies grow
On the banks of Italy.'

13 'O what hills are you, yon pleasant hills,
That the sun shines sweetly on?'
'O yon are the hills of heaven,' he said,
'Where you will never win.'[3]

14 'O whaten a mountain is yon,' she said,
'All so dreary wi frost and snow?'
'O yon is the mountain of hell,' he cried,
'Where you and I will go.'

15 He strack the tap-mast wi his hand,
The fore-mast wi his knee,
And he brake that gallant ship in twain,
And sank her in the sea.

OUR GOODMAN

1 HAME came our goodman,
And hame came he,
And then he saw a saddle-horse,
Where nae horse should be.

2 'What 's this now, goodwife?
What 's this I see?
How came this horse here,
Without the leave o me?'

Recitative. 'A horse?' quo she.
'Ay, a horse,' quo he.

3 'Shame fa your cuckold face,
Ill mat[4] ye see!
'T is naething, but a broad sow,
My minnie[5] sent to me.'

'A broad sow?' quo he.
'Ay, a sow,' quo shee.

4 'Far hae I ridden,
And farer hae I gane,
But a sadle on a sow's back
I never saw nane.'

[1] Often called *James Harris.* [2] gloomy. [3] come. [4] mot, i.e., may. [5] mother.

5 Hame came our goodman,
And hame came he;
He spy'd a pair of jack-boots,
Where nae boots should be.

6 'What 's this now, goodwife?
What 's this I see?
How came these boots here,
Without the leave o me?'

'Boots?' quo she.
'Ay, boots,' quo he.

7 'Shame fa your cuckold face,
And ill mat ye see!
It 's but a pair of water-stoups,[1]
My minnie sent to me.'

'Water-stoups?' quo he.
'Ay, water-stoups,' quo she.

8 'Far hae I ridden,
And farer hae I gane,
But siller spurs on water-stoups
I saw never nane.'

9 Hame came our goodman,
And hame came he,
And he saw a sword,
Whare a sword should na be.

10 'What 's this now, goodwife?
What 's this I see?
How came this sword here,
Without the leave o me?'

'A sword?' quo she.
'Ay, a sword,' quo he.

11 'Shame fa your cuckold face,
Ill mat ye see!
It 's but a porridge-spurtle,[2]
My minnie sent to me.'

'A spurtle?' quo he.
'Ay, a spurtle,' quo she.

12 'Far hae I ridden,
And farer hae I gane,
But siller-handed spurtles
I saw never nane.'

13 Hame came our goodman,
And hame came he;
There he spy'd a powderd wig,
Where nae wig shoud be.

14 'What 's this now, goodwife?
What 's this I see?
How came this wig here,
Without the leave o me?'

'A wig?' quo she.
'Ay, a wig,' quo he.

15 'Shame fa your cuckold face,
And ill mat you see!
'T is naething but a clocken-hen,[3]
My minnie sent to me.'

'Clocken hen?' quo he.
'Ay, clocken hen,' quo she.

16 'Far hae I ridden,
And farer hae I gane,
But powder on a clocken-hen
I saw never nane.'

17 Hame came our goodman,
And hame came he,
And there he saw a muckle coat,
Where nae coat shoud be.

18 'What 's this now, goodwife?
What 's this I see?
How came this coat here,
Without the leave o me?'

'A coat?' quo she.
'Ay, a coat,' quo he.

19 'Shame fa your cuckold face,
Ill mat ye see!
It 's but a pair o blankets,
My minnie sent to me.'

'Blankets?' quo he.
'Ay, blankets,' quo she.

20 'Far hae I ridden,
And farer hae I gane,
But buttons upon blankets
I saw never nane.'

21 Ben[4] went our goodman,
And ben went he,
And there he spy'd a sturdy man,
Where nae man shoud be.

[1] water-pitchers. [2] porridge stirrer. [3] sitting hen. [4] Into the inner room.

22 'What 's this now, goodwife?
What 's this I see?
How came this man here,
Without the leave o me?'

'A man?' quo she.
'Ay, a man,' quo he.

23 'Poor blind body,
And blinder mat ye be!
It 's a new milking-maid,
My mither sent to me.'

'A maid?' quo he.
'Ay, a maid,' quo she.

24 'Far hae I ridden,
And farer hae I gane,
But lang-bearded maidens
I saw never nane.'

GET UP AND BAR THE DOOR

1 It fell about the Martinmas time,
And a gay time it was then,
When our good wife got puddings [1] to make,
And she 's boild them in the pan.

2 The wind sae cauld blew south and north,
And blew into the floor;
Quoth our goodman to our goodwife,
'Gae out and bar the door.'

3 'My hand is in my hussyfskap,[2]
Goodman, as ye may see;
An it shoud nae be barrd this hundred year,
It 's no be barrd for me.'

4 They made a paction tween them twa,
They made it firm and sure,
That the first word whaeer shoud speak,
Should rise and bar the door.

5 Then by there came two gentlemen,
At twelve o'clock at night,
And they could neither see house nor hall,
Nor coal nor candle-light.

6 'Now whether is this a rich man's house,
Or whether is it a poor?'
But neer a word wad ane o them speak,
For barring of the door.

7 And first they ate the white puddings,
And then they ate the black;
Tho muckle thought the goodwife to hersel,
Yet neer a word she spake.

8 Then said the one unto the other,
'Here, man, tak ye my knife;
Do ye tak aff the auld man's beard,
And I 'll kiss the goodwife.'

9 'But there 's nae water in the house,
And what shall we do than?'
What ails thee at the pudding-broo,[3]
That boils into the pan?'

10 O up then started our goodman,
An angry man was he:
'Will ye kiss my wife before my een,
And scad [4] me wi pudding-bree?'

11 Then up and started our goodwife,
Gied three skips on the floor:
'Goodman, you 've spoken the foremost word,
Get up and bar the door.'

THE WIFE WRAPT IN WETHER'S SKIN

1 She wadna bake, she wadna brew,
Hollin,[5] green hollin,
For spoiling o her comely hue.
Bend your bow, Robin.

2 She wadna wash, she wadna wring,
For spoiling o her gay goud ring.

3 Robin he 's gane to the fald
And catched a weather by the spauld.[6]

4 And he has killed his weather black
And laid the skin upon her back

5 'I darena pay [7] you, for your kin,
But I can pay my weather's skin.

6 'I darena pay my lady's back,
But I can pay my weather black.'

[1] sausages. [2] housewifery. [3] brew, juice. [4] scald. [5] holly. [6] shoulder. [7] beat.

7 'O Robin, Robin, lat me be,
And I 'll a good wife be to thee.

8 'It 's I will wash, and I will wring,
And never mind my gay goud ring.

9 'It 's I will bake, and I will brew,
And never mind my comely hue.

10 'And gin ye thinkna that eneugh,
I 'se tak the goad and I 'se ca[1] the pleugh.

11 'Gin ye ca for mair whan that is doon,
I 'll sit i the neuk[2] and I 'll dight[3] your shoon.'

THE BITTER WITHY[4]

1 As it fell out on a Holy day,
The drops of rain did fall, did fall,
Our Saviour asked leave of His mother Mary
If He might go play at ball.

2 'To play at ball, my own dear Son,
It 's time you was going or gone,
But be sure let me hear no complaint of You
At night when You do come home.'

3 It was upling scorn and downling scorn,
Oh, there He met three jolly jerdins:[5]
Oh, there He asked the three jolly jerdins
If they would go play at ball.

4 'Oh, we are lords' and ladies' sons,
Born in bower or in hall,
And You are but some poor maid's child
Born'd in an ox's stall.'

5 'If you are lords' and ladies' sons,
Born'd in bower or in hall,
Then at the very last I 'll make it appear
That I am above you all.'

6 Our Saviour built a bridge with the beams of the sun,
And over He gone, He gone He,
And after followed the three jolly jerdins,
And drownded they were all three.

7 It was upling scorn and downling scorn,
The mothers of them did whoop and call,
Crying out, 'Mary mild, call home your Child,
For ours are drownded all.'

8 Mary mild, Mary mild, called home her Child,
And laid our Saviour across her knee,
And with a whole handful of bitter withy[6]
She gave Him slashes three.

9 Then He says to His Mother, 'Oh! the withy, oh! the withy,
The bitter withy that causes me to smart, to smart,
Oh! the withy it shall be the very first tree
That perishes at the heart.'

[1] call, drive. [2] nook, corner. [3] clean.

[4] *The Bitter Withy*, probably a genuine popular ballad, was first recorded in 1868, and printed by Mr. Frank Sidgwick in *Notes and Queries*, Series 10, IV, 84 *f.*, July, 1905. See *Pub. Mod. Lang. Ass. Am.*, vol. 23, p. 141, for a discussion of it by G. H. Gerould. It is representative of many mediæval tales of the Saviour's childhood.

[5] An inexplicable word.

[6] willow twig.

JOHN BARBOUR

THE BRUCE

INTRODUCTION

(I, 1–36)

STORYSS to rede ar delitabill,
Supposs that thai be nocht bot fabill;
Than suld storyss that suthfast wer,
And [1] thai war said on gud maner,
Hawe doubill plesance in heryng.
The fyrst plesance is the carping,[2]
And the tothir the suthfastnes,
That schawys the thing rycht as it wes;
And suth thyngis that ar likand [3]
Tyll [4] mannys heryng, ar plesand.
Tharfor I wald fayne set my will,
Giff my wyt mycht suffice thartill,[5]
To put in wryt [6] a suthfast story,
That it lest ay furth in memory,
Swa that na lenth of tyme it let,[7]
Na ger [8] it haly [9] be forget.
For aulde storys that men redys,
Representis to thaim the dedys
Of stalwart folk that lywyt ar,[10]
Rycht as thai than in presence war.
And, certis, thai suld weill hawe pryss,
That in thar tyme war wycht [11] and wyss,
And led thar lyff in gret trawaill,[12]
And oft in hard stour [13] off bataill
Wan richt gret price off chewalry,
And war woydyt [14] off cowardy;
As wes king Robert off Scotland,
That hardy wes off hart and hand;
And gud Schyr Iames off Douglas,
That in his tyme sa worthy was,
That off hys price and hys bounte
In fer landis renownyt wes he.
Off thaim I thynk this buk to ma;[15]
Now God gyff grace that I may swa
Tret it, and bryng it till endyng,
That I say nocht bot suthfast thing!

[1] If. [2] narrative. [3] pleasing. [4] To. [5] thereto. [6] writing. [7] hinder, destroy. [8] make. [9] wholly. [10] lived before. [11] powerful. [12] labor. [13] shock. [14] cleared. [15] make.

HOW SCOTLAND LEARNED TO LOVE LIBERTY

(I, 179–246)

QUHEN [16] schir Edward, the mychty king,
Had on this wyss [17] done his likyng [18]
Off Ihone the Balleoll, that swa sone
Was all defawtyt [19] and undone,
To Scotland went he than in hy,
And all the land gan occupy:
Sa hale,[20] that bath castell and toune
War in-till [21] his possessioune,
Fra Weik anent Orknay
To Mullyr-snwk in Gallaway:
And stuffyt all with Ingliss men.
Schyrreffys and bailyheys maid he then;
And alkyn [22] othir officeris,
That for to gowern land afferis,[23]
He maid off Inglis nation;
That worthyt [24] than sa ryth fellone,[25]
And sa wykkyt and cowatouss,
And swa hawtane [26] and dispitouss,
That Scottis men mycht do na thing
That evir mycht pleyss to thar liking.[27]
Thar wyffis wald thai oft forly,[28]
And thar dochtrys dispitusly;
And gyff [29] ony thar-at war wrath,
Thai watyt [30] hym wele with gret scaith,
For thai suld fynd sone enchesone [31]
To put hym to destructione.
And gyff that ony man thaim by
Had ony thing that wes worthy,
As horss, or hund, or othir thing,
That plesand war to thar liking,
With rycht or wrang it have wald thai.
And gyf ony wald thaim withsay,
Thai suld swa do, that thai suld tyne [32]
Othir land or lyff, or leyff [33] in pyne.

[16] In middle Scots *quh*=wh. [17] wise, fashion. [18] pleasure. [19] defaulted. [20] wholly. [21] into, in. [22] all kinds of. [23] belong. [24] became. [25] very cruel. [26] haughty. [27] pleasure. [28] outrage. [29] if. [30] lay in wait for. [31] reason. [32] lose. [33] live.

For thai dempt[1] thaim eftir thar will,
Takand[2] na kep[3] to rycht na skill.[4]
A! quhat thai dempt thaim felonly![5]
For gud knychtis that war worthy,
For litill enchesoune or than nane,
Thai hangyt be the nekke bane.
Alas! that folk, that evir wes fre,
And in fredome wount for to be,
Throw thar gret myschance and foly,
War tretyt than sa wykkytly,
That thar fays[6] thar iugis was;
Quhat wrechitnes may man have mar?
A! fredome is a noble thing!
Fredome mayss[7] man to haiff liking;
Fredome all solace to man giffis:
He levys at ess that frely levys!
A noble hart may haiff nane ess,
Na ellys nocht that may him pless,
Gyff fredome failyhe;[8] for fre liking
Is yharnyt[9] our[10] all othir thing.
Na[11] he, that ay hass levyt fre,
May nocht knaw weill the propyrte,
The angyr, na the wrechyt dome,
That is cowplyt to foule thyrldome.
Bot gyff he had assayit it,
Than all perquer[12] he suld it wyt;[13]
And suld think fredome mar to pryss
Than all the gold in warld that is.
Thus contrar thingis evir-mar
Discoweryngis off the tothir ar.
And he that thryll[14] is has nocht his,
All that he hass enbandownyt[15] is
Till hys lord, quhat euir he be.

HOW THE KING READ *FERUMBRAS*

(III, 405–67)

The king, eftir that he was gane,
To Lowchlomond the way has tane,[16]
And come thar on the thrid day.
Bot thar-about na bait[17] fand thai,
That mycht thaim our the watir ber:
Than war thai wa[18] on gret maner:
For it wes fer about to ga;
And thai war in-to dout alsua,
To meyt thar fayis[19] that spred war wyd.
Tharfor, endlang the louchhis[20] syd,
Sa besyly thai socht, and fast,
Tyll Iamys of Dowglas, at the last,
Fand a litill sonkyn bate,[21]
And to the land it drew, fut-hate.[22]
Bot it sa litill wes, that it
Mycht our the wattir bot thresum[23] flyt.[24]
Thai send thar-off word to the king,
That wes ioyfull off that fynding;
And fyrst in-to the bate is gane,
With him Dowglas; the thrid wes ane
That rowyt thaim our deliverly,[25]
And set thaim on the land all dry:
And rowyt sa of-syss[26] to and fra,
Fechand[27] ay our[28] twa and twa,
That, in a nycht and in a day,
Cummyn owt-our[29] the louch ar thai.
For sum off thaim couth swome[30] full weill,
And on his bak ber a fardele.[31]
Swa with swymmyng, and with rowyng,
Thai brocht thaim our, and all thar thing.
The king, the quhilis,[32] meryly
Red to thaim, that war him by,
Romanys off worthi Ferambrace,
That worthily our-cummyn[33] was
Throw the rycht douchty Olywer;
And how the duk-peris[34] wer
Assegyt[35] in-till Egrymor,
Quhar king Lawyne lay thaim befor,
With may[36] thowsandis then I can say.
And bot eleven within war thai,
And a woman: and war sa stad,
That thai na mete thar-within had,
Bot as thai fra thar fayis[37] wan.
Yheyte[38] sua contenyt thai thaim than,
That thai the tour held manlily,
Till that Rychard off Normandy,
Magre[39] his fayis, warnyt the king,
That wes ioyfull off this tithing;[40]
For he wend[41] thai had all bene slayne.
Tharfor he turnyt in hy[42] agayne,
And wan Mantrybill and passit Flagot;
And syne Lawyne and all his flot[43]
Dispitusly discumfyt he:
And deliveryt his men all fre,
And wan the naylis, and the sper,
And the croune, that Iesu couth[44] ber;
And off the croice a gret party[45]
He wan throw his chewalry.
The gud king, apon this maner,
Comfortyt thaim that war him ner;
And maid thaim gamyn[46] and solace,
Till that his folk all passyt was.

1 judged. 2 taking. 3 heed. 4 nor reason. 5 How wickedly they condemned them! 6 foes. 7 makes. 8 fail. 9 yearned for. 10 over. 11 nor. 12 by heart. 13 know. 14 thrall. 15 subjected. 16 taken. 17 boat. 18 woeful. 19 foes. 20 lake's. 21 boat. 22 hot-foot, hastily. 23 three at a time. 24 transport. 25 quickly. 26 oft-times. 27 Fetching. 28 over. 29 across. 30 swim. 31 burden. 32 meanwhile. 33 overcome. 34 *douze pairs*, the Twelve Peers of France. 35 Besieged. 36 more. 37 foes. 38 yet. 39 In spite of. 40 tidings. 41 weened. 42 haste. 43 fleet. 44 did. 45 piece. 46 mirth

THE BATTLE OF BANNOCK-BURN

(XII, 407–588)

THE Scottis men, quhen it wes day,
Thair mess devotly herd thai say,
Syne tuk a sop, and maid thame yar.[1]
And quhen, thai all assemblit war,
And in thair battalis [2] all purvait,
With thair braid baneris all displayit,
Thai maid knychtis, as it efferis [3]
To men that oysis [4] thai mysteris.
The kyng maid Walter Stewart knycht,
And Iames of Douglass, that wes wicht,[5]
And othir als of gret bounte
He maid, ilkane [6] in thair degre.
Quhen this wes done, that I you say,
Thai went all furth in gud aray,
And tuk the playne full apertly,[7]
Mony wicht man, gud and hardy,
That wer fulfillit of gret bounte.
In-till [8] thair rowtis [9] men mycht se
The Ynglis men, in othir party,
That richt as angelis schane brichtly,
War nocht arayit on sic maner;
For all thair battalis sammyn [10] wer
In a schiltrum; [11] bot quhethir it wes
Throu the gret stratnes [12] of the plass,
That thai war rad [13] till byd [14] fichting,
Or that it wes for abaysing,[15]
I wat [16] nocht; bot in a schiltrum
It semyt thai war, all and some,
Outane [17] the vaward anerly,
That with ane richt gret cumpany
Be thame-selvin arayit war,
And till the battale maid thame yar.
That folk our-tuk [18] ane mekill [19] feld
On breid, quhar mony a schynand scheld,
And mony a burnyst bricht armour,
And mony man of gret valour,
And mony a baner, bricht and scheyne,
Micht in that gret schiltrum be seyne.
And quhen the kyng of Yngland
Saw Scottis men sa tak on hand
To tak the hard feild so planly,
And apon fut, he had ferly,[20]
And said, 'Quhat? will yon Scottis ficht?'
'Yaa, sekirly, schir,' than said a knycht,
Schir Ingerame Vmphrevell hat [21] he,
And said, 'Forsuth, schir, now I se
All the mast ferlifull [22] sycht
That evir I saw, quhen for to ficht
The Scottis men has tane on hand
Agane [23] the gret mycht of Yngland,
In plane hard feild to gif battale.
Bot and yhe [24] will trow my consale,
Yhe sall discomfit thame lichtly.
Yhe sal vithdraw hyne [25] suddanly,
With battalis, baneris, and pennownys,
Quhill that we pass our palyeownys;[26]
And ye sall se als soyne at [27] thai,
Magre thair lordis, sall brek aray,
And scale [28] thame, our harness to ta.[29]
And quhen we se thame scalit swa,
Prik we than on thame hardely,
And we sall haf thame weill lichtly.
For than sall nane be knyt [30] to ficht,
That may withstand our mekill mycht.'
'I will nocht,' said the king, 'perfay,[31]
Do sa; for ther sall no man say
That I suld eschewe the battale,
Na withdraw me for sic rangale.' [32]
Quhen this wes said that er [33] said I,
The Scottis men full devotly
Knelyt all doune, till God to pray,
And a schort prayer thair maid thai
Till God, till help thame in that ficht.
And quhen the Yngliss king has sicht
Of thame kneland, he said in hy — [34]
'Yon folk knelis till ask mercy.'
Schir Yngerame said, 'Ye say suth now;
Thai ask mercy, bot nocht at yow.
For thair trespass to God thai cry.
I tell yow a thing sekirly,
That yon men will wyn all or de,
For doubt of ded [35] thar sall nane fle.'
'Now be it swa,' than said the kyng,
'We sall it se but [36] delaying.'
He gert [37] trump up to the assemble;
On athir [38] syd than men mycht se
Full mony wicht men and worthy,
All ready till do chevelry.

Thus war thai boune [39] on athir syde;
And Yngliss men, with mekill prid,
That war in-till thar awaward,[40]
Till the battall that schir Eduard
Gouernyt and led, held straucht thair way.
The horss with spuris hardnyt [41] thai,
And prikit apon thame sturdely;
And thai met thame richt hardely,

1 ready. 2 battalions. 3 belongs. 4 use. 5 stout. 6 each one. 7 openly. 8 In. 9 bands. 10 together. 11 squadron. 12 narrowness. 13 afraid. 14 bide. 15 dismay. 16 know. 17 Except. 18 covered. 19 large. 20 wonder. 21 was called.

22 wonderful. 23 Against. 24 if you. 25 hence. 26 pavilions. 27 as soon that. 28 scatter. 29 take. 30 joined together. 31 in faith. 32 rabble. 33 before. 34 haste. 35 fear of death. 36 without. 37 caused. 38 either. 39 ready. 40 vanguard. 41 emboldened.

Swa that, at the assemble thair,
Sic a frusching[1] of speris wair
That fer away men mycht it her.
At thar metyng, for-outen wer,[2]
Wer stedis stekit[3] mony ane,
Mony gud man borne doune and slane,
And mony ane hardyment douchtely
Wes thair eschewit[4] full hardely.
Thai dang on othir with wapnys ser;[5]
Sum of the horss, that stekit wer,
Ruschit and relit richt roydly.[6]
Bot the remanant, nocht-for-thi,[7]
That mycht cum to the assembling,[8]
For that lat[9] maid rycht no stynting,[10]
But assemblit full hardely.
And thai met thame full sturdely
With speris that war scharp to scher,
And axis that weill grundyn wer,
Quhar-with wes roucht full mony rout.[11]
The ficht wes thair so fell and stout,
That mony worthy men and wicht,
Throu forss, wes fellit in that ficht,
That had no mycht to ryss agane.
The Scottis men fast can thame payne[12]
Thair fais mekill mycht to russ.[13]
I trow thai sall no payne refuss,
Na perell, quhill thar fais be
Set in-till herd proplexite.
And quhen the erll of Murref sa[14]
Thair avaward saw stoutly ta[15]
The way to schir Eduard all straucht,
That met thame with full mekill maucht,
He held his way with his baner
Till the gret rout,[16] quhar sammyn[17] wer
The nyne battales that wes so braid,
That so feill baneris with thame had,
And of men sa gret quantite,
That it war wonder for to se.
The gud erll thiddir tuk the way
With his battale in gud aray,
And assemblit so hardely,
Quhill men mycht her, that had beyn by,
A gret frusche of the speres that brast.
For thair fais assalyeit[18] fast,
That on stedis, with mekill prid,
Com prikand as thai wald our-ryd[19]
The erll and all his cumpany.
Bot thai met thame so sturdely,
That mony of thame till erd thai bar.
And mony a steid wes stekit thar,

1 breaking. 2 without doubt. 3 stabbed. 4 achieved. 5 various weapons. 6 reeled right rudely. 7 nevertheless. 8 encounter. 9 hindrance. 10 stopping. 11 dealt full many a blow. 12 exert. 13 overthrow. 14 saw. 15 take. 16 band, crowd. 17 together. 18 assailed. 19 over-ride.

And mony gud man fellit undir feit,
That had no power to riss yeit.
Ther men mycht se ane hard battale,
And sum defend and sum assale,
And mony a riall rymmyll[20] ryde[21]
Be roucht[22] thair apon aithir syde,
Quhill throu the byrneiss[23] brist[24] the blud,
That till the erd doune stremand yud.[25]
The erll of Murreff and his men
So stoutly thame contenit[26] then,
That thai wan plass[27] ay mair and mair
On thair fais, the quhethir[28] thai war
Ay ten for ane, or ma,[29] perfay;
Swa that it semyt weill that thai
War tynt[30] emang so gret menghe,[31]
As thai war plungit in the se.
And quhen the Yngliss men has seyne
The erll and all his men be-deyne[32]
Fecht sa stoutly, but effraying,[33]
Richt as thai had nane abaysing,[34]
Thai pressit thame with all thar mycht.
And thai, with speris and suerdis[35] brycht,
And axis that rycht scharply schar,[36]
In-myd the visage[37] met thame thar
Thar men mycht se ane stalwart stour,[38]
And mony men of gret valour
With speris, macyss,[39] and with knyvis,
And othir wapnys vissill[40] thair lyvis,
Swa that mony fell doune all ded;
The gyrss wox[41] with the blude all red.
The erll, that wicht wes and worthy,
And his men faucht so manfully,
That, quha sa[42] had seyne thaim that day,
I trow, forsuth, that thai suld say,
That thai suld do thair devour[43] wele,
Swa that thair fayis suld it feill.

(XIII, 1–408)

Qwhen that thir two first batellis wer
Assemblit, as I said yow er,
The Steward, Walter that than wes,
And the gud lord als of Dougless,
In a battale quhen that thai saw
The erll, forouten[44] dreid or aw,
Assemmyll[45] with his cumpany
On all the folk so sturdely,
For till help him thai held thar way
With thar battale in gud aray,

20 royal blow. 21 severe. 22 reached, struck. 23 breast-plate. 24 burst. 25 went. 26 conducted. 27 gained ground. 28 although. 29 more. 30 lost. 31 numbers. 32 forthwith. 33 without being afraid. 34 dismay. 35 swords. 36 cut. 37 Face to face. 38 severe shock. 39 maces. 40 exchange. 41 grass grew. 42 whosoever. 43 duty. 44 without. 45 attack.

And assemmyllit so hardely
Besyd the erll a litill by,
Thair fais feld[1] thair cummyng weill;
For with wapnys stalwart of steill
Thai dang[2] on thame with all thar mycht.
Thair fais resavit thame weill, I hycht,[3]
With swerdis, speris, and with macyss.
The battale thair so felloune[4] was,
And sua richt gret spilling of blud,
That on the erd the fluss[5] it stud.
The Scottis men so weill thame bar,
And sua gret slauchtir maid thai thar,
And fra so feill[6] the livis revit,[7]
That all the feild was bludy levit.[8]
That tym thir[9] thre battalis wer
All syde be syde fechtand weill neir.
That mycht man her richt mony dynt
And wapnys apon armour stynt,[10]
And se tummyll[11] knychtis and stedis,
With mony rich and ryoll wedis
Defoulit roydly under feit.
Sum held on loft, sum tynt the suet.[12]
A long quhill thus fechtand[13] thai wer,
That men no noyis na cry mycht her;
Men herd nocht ellis bot granys[14] and dyntis
That slew[15] fire, as men dois on flyntis;
Sa faucht thai ilkane[16] egirly
That thai maid nouthir noyis no cry,
Bot dang on othir at that mycht,
With wapnys that war burnyst brycht.
The arrowis als so thik thai flaw,[17]
That thai mycht say weill, at[18] thaim saw,
That thai ane hydwiss[19] schour can ma;
For quhar thai fell, I undirta,
Thai left eftir thame taknyng[20]
That sall neid, as I trow, lechyng.[21]
The Ynglis archeris schot so fast,
That, mycht thar schot haf had last,[22]
It had beyne hard to Scottis men.
Bot king Robert, that weill can ken
That the archeris war perelouss,
And thar schot hard and richt grevouss,
Ordanit forrouth[23] the assemble
His marschall with a gret menghe,[24]
Fiff hundreth armyt weill in steill,
That on licht horss war horsyt weill,
For to prik emang the archeris,
And sua assailye thame with speris
That thai no laser haf to schute.
This marschall that I of mut,[25]

[1] felt. [2] hammered. [3] promise. [4] wicked, bitter. [5] marsh. [6] many. [7] bereft. [8] left. [9] these. [10] struck. [11] tumble. [12] lost their life-blood (lit., sweat). [13] fighting. [14] groans. [15] struck. [16] each one. [17] flew. [18] that. [19] hideous. [20] token. [21] doctoring. [22] continuance. [23] commanded out from. [24] number. [25] tell.

That schir Robert of Keth wes cald,
As I befor hass to yow tald,
Quhen that he saw the battalis swa
Assemmyll and to-giddir ga,
And saw the archeris schut stoutly,
With all thame of his cumpany
In hy apon thame can[26] he ryde,
And our-tuk thame at a syde,
And ruschit emang thaim so roydly,
Strikand thame sua dispitfully,
And in sic fusioune[27] berand doune
And slayand thame without ransoune,[28]
That thai thame scalit euirilkane;[29]
And fra that tyme furth ther wes nane
That assemlit sic schot till ma.[30]
Quhen Scottis archeris saw at swa
Thai war rebutit,[31] thai wox hardy,
With all thar mycht schot egirly
Emang the horss-men that thar raid,
And woundis wyde to thame thai maid,
And slew of thame a wele gret dele;
Thai bar hame hardely and weill.
For fra[32] thair fais archeris were
Scalit, as I have said yhow ere,
That ma than thai war be gret thing,[33]
Swa that thai dred nocht thar schuting,
Thai wox so hardy that thame thoucht
Thai suld set all thair fais at noucht.
The marschall and his cumpany
Wes yeit,[34] as to yow ere said I,
Amang the archeris, quhar thai maid
With speris rowme quhar at[35] thai raid,
And slew all that thai mycht ourta.[36]
And thai weill lichtly mycht do swa,
For thai had nocht a strak to stynt,
Na for to hald agane a dynt;
And agane armyt men to ficht
May nakit[37] men haff litill mycht.
Thai scalit thame on sic maner,
That sum to thar gret battelis wer
Withdrawin thaim in full gret hy,
And sum war fled all utrely.[38]
Bot the folk that behynd thame was,
That for thair awne folk had no space
Yeit than to cum to the assemblyng,
In agane smertly can thai dyng.[39]
The archeris that thai met fleand,[40]
That than war maid so recryand,[41]
That thair hertis war tynt[42] cleirly,
I trow thai sall nocht scath[43] gretly

[26] did. [27] confusion. [28] ransom, quarter. [29] scattered everyone. [30] make. [31] repulsed. [32] after. [33] Who were many more than they. [34] gone. [35] room wherever. [36] overtake. [37] unarmed. [38] utterly. [39] did thrust. [40] fleeing. [41] recreant. [42] lost. [43] injury.

The Scottis men with schot that day.
And the gud king Robert, that ay
Was fillit of full gret bounte,
Saw how that his battelis thre
So hardely assemblit thar,
That so weill in the ficht thame bar,
And sa fast on thair fais can dyng
That him thoucht nane had abaysing,
And how the archeris war scalit then;
He was all blith, and till his men
He said, "Lordingis, now luk that yhe
Worthy and of gud covyne[1] be
At this assemble, and hardy;
And assemmyll so sturdely
That no thing may befor yow stand.
Our men so freschly ar fechtand,
That thai thair fais has cumrait[2] swa
That, be thai presit, I undirta,[3]
A litill fastar, yhe sall se
That thai discumfit soyn[4] sall be.
Now ga we on them so hardely,
And ding on them sa doughtely,
That they may feele, at our comming,
That we them hate in meekle thing:
For great cause they have us made,
That occupied our landis brade,
And put all to subiectioun:
Your goodis made all theirs commoun:
Our kyn and friendis, for their awne,
Despitteously hanged and drawne:
And wald destroy us gif[5] they might.
Bot, I trow, God, through his foresight,
This day hes grented us his grace
To wrek[6] us on them in this place."
Quhen this wes said, thai held thar way,
And on a syde assemblit thai
So stoutly, that at thar cummyng
Thair fais wer ruschit[7] a gret thing.
Ther men mycht se men freschly ficht,
And men that worthy war and wycht
Do mony worthy vassalage;[8]
Thai faucht as thai war in a rage.
For quhen the Scottis ynkirly[9]
Saw thair fais sa sturdely
Stand in-to battale thame agane,[10]
With all thar mycht and all thar mayne
Thai layd on, as men out of wit;
For quhar thai with full strak mycht hit,
Thair mycht no armyng stynt thar strak;[11]
Thai to-fruschit[12] thame thai mycht our-tak,
And with axis sic duschis gaff[13]
That thai helmys and hedis claff[14]

1 counsel. 2 harassed. 3 undertake. 4 soon. 5 if. 6 avenge. 7 driven far back. 8 prowess. 9 specially. 10 against. 11 check their stroke. 12 smashed to pieces. 13 blows gave. 14 cleft.

And thair fais richt hardely
Met thame, and dang on douchtely
With wapnys that war stith[15] of steill.
Thar wes the battell strikyn weill;
So gret dynnyng ther wes of dyntis
As wapnys apon armor styntis,
And of speris so gret bristing,[16]
With sic thrawing[17] and sic thristing,[18]
Sic gyrnyng, granyng,[19] and so gret
A noyis, as thai can othir bet,[20]
And cryit ensengheis[21] on everilk[22] syd,
Gifand and takand woundis wyd,
That it wes hydwiss for till her
All four the battelis, wicht[23] that wer,
Fechtand in-till a[24] front haly.
Almychty God! full douchtely
Schir Edward the Bryss and his men
Amang thair fais contenyt thame then,
Fechtand in-to sa gud covyne[25]
So hardy, worthy, and so fyne,
That thar awaward[26] ruschit was,
And, magre thairis,[27] left the plais,
And to thar gret rowt to warrand[28]
Thai went, that than had apon hand,
So gret not,[29] that thai war effrait,
For Scottis men thame hard assait,[30]
That than war in ane schiltrum[31] all.
Quha hapnit in that ficht to fall,
I trow agane he suld nocht riss.
Ther men mycht se on mony wiss
Hardyment eschewit[32] douchtely,
And mony that wicht war and hardy
Doune under feit lyand all dede,
Quhar all the feild of blud wes red.
Armoris and quyntis[33] that thai bare
With blud wes swa defowlit thar,
That thai mycht nocht discrivit[34] be.
A! mychty God! quha than mycht se
The Steward Walter and his rout
And the gud Dowglas that wes stout
Fechtand in-to the stalward stour,[35]
He suld say that till all honour
Thai war worthy, that in that ficht
Sa fast presit thair fais mycht,
That thai thame ruschit[36] quhar thai yeid.[37]
Thair mycht men se mony a steid
Fleand on stray, that lord had nane.
A! lord! quha than gud tent[38] had tane

15 strong. 16 breaking. 17 twisting. 18 thrusting. 19 grinning, groaning. 20 did beat others. 21 battle-cries. 22 every. 23 stout. 24 one. 25 with so good a plan. 26 vanguard. 27 in spite of themselves. 28 shelter. 29 business. 30 assailed. 31 squadron. 32 achieved. 33 Coats of armor and badges. 34 discerned, made out. 35 shock of battle. 36 bore back. 37 went. 38 notice.

To the gud erll off Murreff,
And his, that swa gret rowtis [1] gaf,
And faucht so fast in that battale,
Tholand [2] sic payne and sic travale,
That thai and thairis maid sic debat,
That quhar thai com, thai maid thaim gat! [3]
Than mycht men heir ensengheis cry,
And Scottis men cry hardely,
'On thame! On thame! On thame! thai faill!'
With that so hard thai can assaill,
And slew all that thai mycht our-ta,[4]
And the Scottis archeris alsua
Schot emang thame so sturdely,
Ingrevand [5] thame so gretumly,[6]
That quhat for [7] thame that with thame faucht,
And swa gret rowtis to thame raucht,[8]
And presit thame full egirly,
And quhat for arrowes that felly
Mony gret woundis can thame ma,[9]
And slew fast of thair horss alsua,
That thai vayndist a litell we [10];
Thai dred so gretly thane till de [11]
That thair covyne was war than eir.[12]
For thai that with thame fechtand weir
Set hardyment, and strynth, and will,
With hart and corage als thar-till,[13]
And all thair mayne and all thar mycht,
To put thame fouly to the flycht.
In this tyme that I tell of her,
That the battall on this maner
Wes strikin,[14] quhar on athir party
Thai war fechtand richt manfully,
Yhemen, swanys, and poveraill,[15]
That in the parc to yheyme [16] vittale
War left; quhen thai wist, but lesing,[17]
That thair lordis with fell fichtyng
On thair fais assemblit war,
Ane of them-selwyne that wes thar
Capitane of thame all thai maid;
And schetis that war sum-deill braid
Thai festnyt in steid of baneris
Apon lang treis and on speris,
And said that thai wald se the ficht,
And help thar lordis at thar mycht.
Quhen her-till all assentit war,
And in a rowt assemblit ar,
Fiften thousand thai war and ma.
And than in gret hy thai can ga [18]

With thair baneris all in a rout,
As thai had men beyn stith [19] and stout.
Thai com with all that assemble
Richt quhill [20] thai mycht the battale se.
Than all at anys [21] thai gaf ane cry—
'Apon thame! on thame hardely!'
And thar-with-all cumand [22] ar thai.
Bot thai war yeit weill fer away,
And Yngliss men, that ruschit war
Throu forss of ficht, as I said air,[23]
Quhen thai saw cum with sic a cry
Toward thame sic ane cumpany,
That thai thoucht weill als mony war
As at [24] war fechtand with thame thar,
And thai befor had thame nocht seyne,
Than, wit yhe weill, withouten weyne,[25]
Thai war abasit so gretumly,[26]
That the best and the mast hardy
That wes in-till the oost [27] that day
Wald, with thar mensk,[28] have beyn away.
The king Robert be thair relyng [29]
Saw thai war neir discomfyting,
And his ensenghe can hely [30] cry.
Than with thame of his cumpany
His fais presit so fast, that thai
War than in-till sa gret effray,[31]
That thai left place ay mar and mar.
For all the Scottis men that war thar,
Quhen thai saw thame eschew [32] the ficht,
Dang on thame swa with all thar mycht,
That thai scalit in tropellis ser,[33]
And till discumfitur war ner;
And sum of thame fled all planly.
Bot thai that wicht war and hardy,
That schame letit till ta [34] the flicht,
At gret myschef mantemyt [35] the ficht,
And stithly in the stour can stand.
And quhen the king of Ingland
Saw his men fle in syndry place,
And saw his fais rout,[36] that was
Worthyn so wicht [37] and so hardy,
That all his folk war halely [38]
Swa stonayit,[39] that thai had no mycht
To stynt thair fais in the ficht,
He was abasit so gretumly,
That he and all his cumpany,
Fif hundreth armyt weill at rycht,
In-till a frusche [40] all tuk the flycht,
And till the castell held ther way.
And yeit, as I herd sum men say,

1 blows. 2 Enduring. 3 yield ground. 4 overtake. 5 Injuring. 6 severely. 7 what with. 8 reached them so great blows. 9 did cause. 10 gave way a little. 11 to die. 12 their plight was worse than before. 13 also thereto. 14 stricken, fought. 15 Yeomen, rustics, and poor people. 16 guard. 17 without mistake. 18 did go.

19 able. 20 till. 21 once. 22 coming. 23 before. 24 that. 25 doubt. 26 so greatly dismayed. 27 host. 28 honor. 29 reeling, wavering. 30 loudly. 31 in such a fright. 32 avoid. 33 scattered in several small bands. 34 hindered from taking. 35 maintained. 36 host. 37 Become so powerful. 38 completely. 39 dismayed. 40 In broken ranks.

That of Vallanch schir Amer
Quhen he the feld saw vencust [1] ner,
By the renye [2] led away the king,
Agane his will, fra the fichting.
And quhen schir Gelis de Argente
Saw the king thus and his menghe [3]
Schape thame to fle so spedely,
He com richt to the kyng in hy,
And said, 'Schir, sen that is swa,
That ye thusgat [4] your gat will ga,[5]
Haffis [6] gud day! for agane will I;
Yheit fled I nevir sekirly,[7]
And I cheiss heir to byde and de
Than till lif heir [8] and schamfully fle.'
His brydill than but mair abaid [9]
He turnyt, and agane he raid,
And on schir Eduard the Brysis rout
That wes so sturdy and so stout,
As dreid of nakyn [10] thing had he,
He prikit, cryand 'Argente!'
And thai with speris swa him met,
And swa feill [11] speris on hym set,
That he and horss war chargit swa
That bath doune to the erd can ga;
And in that place thau slayne wes he.
Of his ded wes rycht gret pite;
He wes the thrid best knycht, perfay,
That men wist liffand in his day;
He did mony a fair iourne.[12]
On Sarisenis thre derenyeis [13] did he;
And in-till ilk derenye of thai
He vencust Sarisenis twa;
His gret worschip tuk thar ending.
And fra [14] schir Amer with the king
Wes fled, wes nane that durst abyde,
Bot fled, scalit on ilka syde.
And thair fais thame presit fast,
Thai war, to say suth, all agast,
And fled swa richt effrayitly [15]
That of thame a full gret party
Fled to the wattir of Forth; and thar
The mast part of them drownit war.
And Bannokburn, betuix the braiss,[16]
Of horss and men so chargit wass,
That apon drownit horss and men
Men mycht pass dry atour [17] it then.
And laddis, swanys, and rangall,[18]
Quhen thai saw vencust the battall,
Ran emang thame and swa can sla
Thai folk, that no defens mycht ma,
That it war pite for to se.
I herd nevir quhar, in na cuntre,
Folk at swa gret myschef war stad [19];
On a [20] syde thai thair fais had,
That slew thame doune without mercy,
And thai had on the tothir party
Bannokburne, that sa cummyrsum [21] was
Of slyk,[22] and depnes for till pas,
That thair mycht nane atour it ryde.
Thame worthit,[23] magre thairis,[24] abyde;
Swa that sum slayne, sum drownit war;
Micht nane eschap that evir com thar.
The quhethir [25] mony gat away,
That ellis-whar fled, as I herd say.
The kyng, with thame he with him had,
In a rout till the castell raid,
And wald have beyn tharin, for thai
Wist nocht quhat gat [26] to get away.
Bot Philip the Mowbray said him till
'The castell, schir, is at yhour will;
Bot, cum yhe in it, yhe sall se
That yhe sall soyne assegit be.
And thar sall nane of all Yngland
To mak yow rescourss [27] tak on hand.
And but rescours may no castele
Be haldin lang: yhe wat this wele;
Tharfor confort yow, and relye [28]
Your men about yow richt straitlye,
And haldis about the Park the way.
Knyt yow als sadly [29] as yhe may,
For I trow that nane sall haf mycht
That chassis, with so feill to ficht.'
And as he consalit, thai have done;
Beneth the castell went thai soyne,[30]
Richt by the Rownde Tabill thair way,
And syne the Park enveronyt [31] thai,
And toward Lithkew held in hy.
Bot, I trow, thai sall hastely
Be convoyit with folk, that thai,
I trow, mycht suffer weill away! [32]
For schir Iames, lord of Douglass,
Com till his kyng and askit the chass,
And he gaf him lef but abaid.[33]
Bot all to few of horss he hade;
He had nocht in his rowt sexty,
The quhethir he sped him hastely
The way eftir the kyng to ta.
Now let him on his wayis ga,
And eftir this we sall weill tell
Quhat till hym in his chass byfell.

[1] vanquished. [2] rein. [3] retinue. [4] in this fashion. [5] will go your way. [6] Have. [7] certainly. [8] to live here. [9] without more delay. [10] no kind of. [11] many. [12] feat of arms. [13] conflicts. [14] after. [15] in a panic. [16] banks. [17] across. [18] peasants and rabble. [19] placed. [20] one. [21] difficult to cross. [22] mud. [23] It behooved them. [24] in spite of themselves. [25] Nevertheless. [26] way. [27] rescue. [28] rally. [29] close your ranks as closely. [30] soon. [31] went round. [32] would gladly have absent. [33] without delay.

Verse Chronicles

'BLIND HARRY'

THE WALLACE

THE FISHING ADVENTURE

(I, 367–433)

So on a tym he desyrit to play.
In Aperill the three and twentieth day,
Till Erevyn wattir fysche to tak he went;
Sic fantasye fell in his entent.[1]
To leide[2] his net, a child furth with him yeid;[3]
But he, or nowne,[4] was in a fellowne[5] dreid.
His suerd he left, so did he nevir agayne;
It dide him gud, suppos[6] he sufferyt payne.
Off that labour as than he was nocht sle:[7]
Happy he was, tuk fysche haboundanle.
Or[8] of the day ten hours our couth pas,[9]
Ridand thar come, ner by quhar Wallace was,
The lorde Persye, was captane than off Ayr;
Fra thine[10] he turnde and couth to Glaskow fair.[11]
Part of the court had Wallace labour seyne,
Till him raid five cled into ganand greyne,[12]
And said sone; 'Scot, Martyns fysche[13] we wald have.'
Wallace meklye agayne ansuer him gave;
'It war resone, me think, yhe suld haif part:
Waith[14] suld be delt, in all place, with fre hart.'
He bad his child, 'Gyff thaim of our waithyng.'[14]
The Sothroun said; 'As now of thi delyng
We will nocht tak, thow wald giff us our[15] small.'
He lychtyt doun, and fra the child tuk all.
Wallas said than; 'Gentill men gif[16] ye be,
Leiff us sum part, we pray for cheryte.
An agyt knycht servis our Lady to day;
Gud frend, leiff part and tak nocht allaway.'
'Thow sall haiff leiff[17] to fysche, and tak the ma,[18]
All this forsuth sall in our flyttyng[19] ga.

[1] Such a fancy he conceived. [2] carry. [3] a young fellow went with him. [4] ere noon. [5] extreme. [6] although. [7] skillful. [8] Ere. [9] did pass by. [10] thence. [11] did go to Glasgow. [12] in comely green. [13] Unexplained. [14] Spoil. [15] too. [16] if. [17] have leave. [18] more for thyself. [19] baggage.

We serff a lord; thir[20] fysches all till him gang.'
Wallace ansuerd, said; 'Thow art in the wrang.'
'Quham thowis[21] thow, Scot? in faith thow servis[22] a blaw.'
Till him he ran, and out a suerd can[23] draw.
Willyham was wa, he had na wappynis thar,
Bot the poutstaff,[25] the quhilk[26] in hand he bar.
Wallas with it fast on the cheik him tuk
Wyth so gud will, quhill[27] of his feit he schuk.
The suerd flaw fra him a fur breid[28] on the land.
Wallas was glaid, and hynt[29] it sone in hand;
And with the swerd awkwart[30] he him gave
Undyr the hat, his crage[31] in sondre drave.
Be that the layff[32] lychtyt about Wallas;
He had no helpe, only bot Goddis grace.
On athir side full fast on him thai dang;[33]
Gret perell was giff thai had lestyt lang.
Apone the hede in gret ire he strak ane;
The scherand[34] suerd glaid[35] to the colar bane.
Ane othir on the arme he hitt so hardely,
Quhill hand and suerd bathe on the feld can ly.
The tothir twa fled to thar hors agayne;
He stekit him was last apon the playne.
Thre slew he thar, twa fled with all thair mycht
Eftir thar lord; bot he was out off sicht,
Takand the mure,[36] or he and thai couth twyne.[37]
Till him thai raid onon, or thai wald blyne,[38]
And cryit; 'Lord, abide; your men ar martyrit doun[39]
Rycht cruelly, her in this fals regioun.

[20] these. [21] Sayest 'thou' to. MS. *dowis*. [22] deserves. [23] did. [24] woeful. [25] pole (with a net on the end). [26] which. [27] till. [28] a furrow's length away. [29] seized. [30] with a backward stroke. [31] neck. [32] By that time the rest. [33] struck. [34] cutting. [35] glided. [36] Crossing the moor. [37] separate. [38] cease. [39] cut down.

Five of our court her at the wattir baid,[1]
Fysche for to bryng, thocht it na profyt maid.
We ar chapyt,[2] bot in feyld slayne are thre.'
The lord speryt;[3] 'How mony mycht thai be?'
'We saw bot ane that has discumfyst us all.'
Than lewch[4] he lowde, and said; 'Foule mot yow fall;[5]
Sen[6] ane yow all has putt to confusioun.
Quha menys[7] it maist, the devyll of hell him droun;
This day for me, in faith, he beis nocht socht.'

WALLACE AND THE ENGLISH QUEEN

(VIII, 1213–1496)

ADAM WALLACE and Boid furth with him yeid,[8]
By a revir, throu out a floryst[9] meid.
And as thai walk atour[10] the feyldis greyn,
Out off the south thai saw quhar at[11] the queyn,
Towart the ost,[12] come ridand sobyrly;
And fyfty ladyis was in hyr cumpany,
Wallyt of wit, and deboyt off renoun;
Sum wedowis war, and sum off religioun;
And seven preistis that entrit[13] war in age.
Wallace to sic did nevir gret owtrage,
Bot will[14] till him thai maid a gret offens.
Thus prochyt[15] thai on towart thar presens.
At the palyoun,[16] quhar thai the lyoun saw,
To ground thai lycht, and syne[17] on kneis can faw;[18]
Prayand for pece thai cry with petous cher.
Erll Malcom said; 'Our chyftayn is nocht her.'
He bad hyr rys, and said it was nocht rycht,
A queyn on kneis till ony lawar[19] wycht.
Up by the hand the gud erll has hyr tayn;
Atour the bent[20] to Wallace ar thai gayn.
Quhen scho him saw, scho wald haiff knelyt doune;
In armys sone he caucht this queyn with croun,
And kyssyt hyr withoutyn wordis mor;
Sa dyd he nevir to na Sotheron befor.
'Madem,' he said, 'rycht welcum mot ye be;
How plessis yow our ostyng[21] for to se?'
'Rycht weyll,' scho said, 'off frendschip haiff we neid;
God grant ye wald off our nessis[22] to speid.
Suffyr we mon,[23] suppos it lik[24] us ill;
Bot trastis weyll,[25] it is contrar our will.'
'Ye sall remayn, with this lord I mon gang;
Fra your presens we sall nocht tary lang.'
The erll and he on to the palyon yeid,
With gud avys to deym mar[26] off this deid.
Till consell son Wallace gart[27] call thaim to:
'Lordys,' he said, 'ye wait[28] quhat is ado.
Off thar cummyng my selff has na plesance;
Herfor mon we wyrk with ordinance.[29]
Wemen may become tempnyng in to wer,[30]
Amang fullis[31] that can thaim nocht forber.
I say nocht this be thir,[32] nor yeit the queyn;
I trow it be bot gud that scho will meyn.
Bot sampyll[33] tak off lang tym passit by;
At Rownsywaill[34] the tresoun was playnly
Be wemen maid, that Ganyelon with him brocht,
And Turke wyn;[35] forber thaim couth thai nocht.
Langws[36] in wer gert thaim desyr thair will,
Quhilk brocht Charlis to fellon[37] loss and ill.
The flour off France, withoutyn redempcioun,
Throuch that foull deid, was brocht to confusioun.
Commaund your men tharfor in privay wys,[38]
Apayn[39] off lyff thai wyrk nocht on sic wys,
Nane spek with thaim, bot wysmen off gret waill,[40]
At[41] lordis ar, and sworn to this consaill.'
Thir chargis thai did als wysly as thai mocht;
This ordynance throw all the ost was wrocht.
He and the erll bathe to the queyn thai went,
Rasavyt hyr fayr, and brocht hyr till a tent;

1 abode. 2 escaped. 3 asked. 4 laughed. 5 Curse on you. 6 Since. 7 Who bemoans. 8 went. 9 blooming. 10 across. 11 where that. 12 host. 13 Chosen for. 14 judged. 15 advanced. 16 Unless. 17 approached. 18 pavilion. 19 then. 20 did fall. 21 lower. 22 plain.

23 array. 24 Perhaps corruption of *needs*. 25 must. 26 please. 27 believe well. 28 With good advice to judge more. 29 caused. 30 know. 31 order. 32 Women may become tempting in war. MS. *be contempnyng*. 33 fools. 34 concerning these. 35 example. 36 Roncesvalles. 37 Turkish wine. 38 tedium (?). 39 deadly. 40 privately. 41 On pain. 42 avail, weight. 43 That.

To dyner bownyt[1] als gudly as thai can;
And servit was with mony likly[2] man.
Gud purvyance the queyn had with hyr wrocht;
A say[3] scho tuk off all thyng at thai brocht.
Wallace persavyt, and said; 'We haiff no dreid:
I can nocht trow ladyis wald do sic deid,
To poysoun men, for all Ingland to wyn.'
The queyn ansuerd; 'Gyff poysoun be tharin,
Off ony thyng quhilk is brocht her with me,
Apon my selff fyrst sorow sall ye se.'
Sone eftir meit, a marchell gart all absent,
Bot lordis, and thai at suld to consaill went.
Ladyis apperyt in presens with the queyn.
Wallace askyt, quhat hyr cummyng mycht meyn.
'For pes,' scho said, 'at we haiff to yow socht;
This byrnand[4] wer in baill[5] has mony brocht.
Ye grant us pees, for him that deit on tre.'
Wallace ansuerd; 'Madeym, that may nocht be.
Ingland has doyne sa gret harmys till us,
We may nocht pass, and lychtly leiff it thus.'
'Yeis,' said the queyne, 'for crystyn folk we ar.
For Goddis saik, sen we desyr no mar,
We awcht pess.'[6] 'Madeym, that I deny.
The perfyt caus I sall yow schaw for quhy;
Ye seke na pes bot for your awn availl.[7]
Quhen your fals king had Scotland grippyt haill,
For nakyn[8] thing that he befor him fand,
He wald nocht thoill[9] the rycht blud in our land;
Bot reft thar rent, syne put thaim selff to dede:[10]
Ransoun off gold mycht mak us na remed.
His fell fals wer[11] sall on him selff be seyn.'
Than sobyrly till him ansuerd the queyn;
'Off thir wrangis[12] amendis war most fair.'
'Madeym,' he said, 'off him we ask no mar,
Bot at he wald byd[13] us in to battaill;
And God be juge, he kennys[14] the mater haill.'

[1] prepared. [2] suitable. [3] taste. [4] burning. [5] harm. [6] ought to have peace by right. [7] advantage. [8] no kind of. [9] endure. [10] death. [11] terrible, unjust war. [12] these wrongs. [13] await. [14] knows.

'Sic mendis,' scho said, 'war nocht rycht gud, think me:
Pes now war best, and[15] it mycht purchest be.
Wald yhe grant pes, and truys[16] with us tak,
Throuch all Ingland we suld gar prayeris mak
For yow, and thaim at in the wer war lost.'
Than Wallace said; 'Quhar sic thing cummys throuch bost,[17]
Prayer off fors,[18] quhar so at it be wrocht,
Till us helpis othyr litill or ellis nocht.'
Warly[19] scho said; 'Thus wysmen has us kend,[20]
Ay eftir wer pees is the finall end.
Quharfor ye suld off your gret malice ces;
The end off wer is cheryte and pes.
Pees is in hevyn, with blyss and lestandnas.[21]
We sall beseke the Pape, off his hie grace,
Till commaund pes, sen we may do na mar.'
'Madeym,' he said, 'or your purches[22] cum thar,
Mendys we think off Ingland for to haiff.'
'Quhat set yow thus,' scho said, 'so God yow saiff,
Fra violent wer at ye lik nocht to duell?'[23]
'Madem,' he said, 'the suth I sall yow tell.
Eftir the dayt off Alexandris ryng,[24]
Our land stud thre yer desolate but[25] king,
Kepyt full weyll at concord in gud stait.
Throuch twa clemyt,[26] thar hapnyt gret debait,
So ernystfully, accord thaim nocht thai can.
Your king thai ast for to be thair ourman.[27]
Slely[28] he slayd[29] throuch strenthis[30] off Scotland:
The kynryk[31] syne he tuk in his awn hand.
He maid a kyng agayn our rychtwys law;
For he of him suld hald the regioun aw.[32]
Contrar this band was all the haill barnage,[33]
For Scotland was yeit nevir in to thrillage.[34]
Gret Julius, that tribute gat off aw,
His wynnyng was in Scotland bot full smaw.
Than your fals king, undyr colour but mar,[35]
Throuch band[36] he maid till Bruce that is our ayr,[37]

[15] if. [16] truce. [17] threat. [18] perforce. [19] Warily. [20] shown. [21] lastingness. [22] solicitation. [23] stop. [24] reign. [25] without. [26] Because two claimed the crown. [27] umpire. [28] cunningly. [29] slid. [30] strongholds. [31] kingdom. [32] all. [33] baronage. [34] thralldom. [35] under pretense without more. [36] bond. [37] heir.

Throuch all Scotland with gret power thai raid,
Undyr that king quhilk he befor had maid.
To Bruce sen syne [1] he kepit na connand: [2]
He said, he wald nocht ga and conquess land
Till othir men; and thus the cas befell.
Than Scotland throuch he demayned [3] himsell;
Slew our elderis, gret pete was to se.
In presone syne lang tyme thai pynit [4] me,
Quhill I fra thaim was castyn out for ded.
Thankit be God he send me sum remed!
Vengyt to be I prevyt [5] all my mycht;
Feyll [6] off thair kyn to dede syn I haiff dycht. [7]
The rage off youth gert me desyr a wyff;
That rewit I sayr, [8] and will do all my liff.
A tratour knycht but mercy gert hyr de,
Ane Hessilryg, bot [9] for despit off me.
Than rang [10] I furth in cruell wer and payn,
Quhill we redemyt part off our land agayn.
Than your curst king desyryt off us a trew; [11]
Quhilk maid Scotland full rathly [12] for to rew.
In to that pess thai set a suttell ayr, [13]
Than xviij scor to dede thai hangit thar,
At noblis war, and worthi off renoun;
Off cot armys [14] eldest in that regioun.
Thar dede [15] we think to veng in all our mycht.
The woman als, that dulfully was dycht, [16]
Out off my mynd that dede will nevir bid,
Quhill God me tak fra this fals warld so wid.
Off Sotheroun syn I can no pete haiff;
Your men in wer I think nevir mor to saiff.'
The breith [17] teris, was gret payn to behald,
Bryst fra his eyn, be [18] he his taill had tald.
The queyn wepyt for pete off Wallace.
'Allace,' scho said, 'wa worth the curssyt cace!
In waryit [19] tym that Hesilryg was born!
Mony worthi throuch his deid ar forlorn.
He suld haiff payn, that saikles [20] sic ane sleuch; [21]
Ingland sen syn has boucht it der enewch,
Thocht scho had beyn a queyn or a prynsace.'
'Madem,' he said, 'as God giff me gud grace,
Prynsace or queyn, in quhat stait so thai be,
In till hir tym scho was als der to me.'
'Wallace,' scho said, 'off this talk we will ces;
The mendis [22] heroff is gud prayer and pes.'
'I grant,' he said, 'off me as now na mayr;
This is rycht nocht bot ekyng [23] off our cayr.'
The queyn fand weyll, langage no thing hyr bet; [24]
Scho trowit with gold that he mycht be our set. [25]
Thre thousand pound, off fynest gold so red,
Scho gert [26] be brocht to Wallace in that sted.
'Madeym,' he said, 'na sic tribut we craiff:
A nothir mendis we wald off Ingland haiff,
Or [27] we raturn fra this regioun agayn,
Off your fals blud that has our elderis slayn.
For all the gold and ryches ye in ryng, [28]
Ye get no pes, bot [29] desir off your king.'
Quhen scho saw weill gold mycht hyr nocht releiff,
Sum part in sport scho thoucht him for to preiff.
'Wallace,' scho said, 'yhe war clepyt my luff: [30]
Mor baundounly [31] I maid me for to pruff; [32]
Traistand [33] tharfor your rancour for to slak;
Me think ye suld do sum thing for my saik.'
Rycht wysly he maid ansuer to the queyn;
'Madem,' he said, 'and [34] verite war seyn,
That ye me luffyt, I awcht [35] yow luff agayn.
Thir wordis all ar no thing bot in vayn.
Sic luff as that is nothing till avance,
To tak a lak, [36] and syne get no plesance.
In spech off luff suttell ye Sotheroun ar;
Ye can ws mok, suppos ye se no mar.'
'In London,' scho said, 'for yow I sufferyt blaym;
Our consall als will lauch quhen we cum haym.
So may thai say, wemen ar fers [37] off thocht
To seke frendschip, and syne can get rycht nocht!'

[1] since then. [2] covenant. [3] domineered. [4] tortured. [5] proved, tried. [6] Many. [7] done to death. [8] I rued sorely. [9] only. [10] raged. [11] truce. [12] soon. [13] In that peace they held a crafty court of justice. [14] coat-armor. [15] Their death. [16] grievously was treated. [17] angry. [18] before. [19] cursed. [20] innocent. [21] slew.

[22] amends, remedy. [23] increase. [24] helped. [25] won over. [26] caused. [27] ere. [28] reign in. [29] without. [30] called my love. [31] recklessly. [32] caused myself to try. [33] trusting. [34] if. [35] should owe. [36] plaything. [37] eager.

'Madem,' he said, 'we wait[1] how ye ar send;
Yhe trow we haiff bot litill for to spend.
Fyrst with your gold, for ye ar rych and wys,
Yhe wald us blynd, sen Scottis ar so nys:[2]
Syn plesand wordis off you and ladyis fayr,
As quha suld dryff the byrdis till a swar[3]
With the small pype, for it most fresche will call.
Madem, as yit ye ma nocht tempt us all.
Gret part off gud is left amang our kyn;
In Ingland als we fynd enewch to wyn.'
Abayssyt[4] scho was to mak ansuer him till.
'Der schyr,' scho said, 'sen this is at your will;
Wer or pes, quhat so yow likis best,
Lat your hye witt and gud consaill degest.'[5]
'Madem,' he said, 'now sall ye undirstand
The resoune quhy that I will mak na band.
With yow, ladyis, I can na trewis bynd;
For your fals king her eftir sone wald fynd,
Quhen he saw tyme, to brek it at his will;
And playnly say, he grantyt[6] nocht thartill.
Than had we nayn bot ladyis to repruff.
That sall he nocht, be God that is abuff.
Upon wemen I will no wer begyn;
On you in faith no worschip is to wyn.[7]
All the haill pass[8] apon him selff he sall tak,
Off pees or wer quhat hapnyt we to mak.'
The queyn grantyt his ansuer sufficient;
So dyd the layff[9] in place that was present.
His delyverance[10] thai held off gret availl,
And stark enewch to schaw to thair consaill.
Wa was the qweyn hyr travaill helpyt nocht.
The gold scho tuk, that thai had with hyr brocht,
In to the ost rycht frely scho it gayff,
Till euirylk man that likyt for till haiff.
Till menstraillis, harroldis, scho delt haboundanle,
Besekand[11] thaim hyr frend at thai wald be.

Quhen Wallace saw the fredom[12] off the queyn,
Sadly he said; 'The suth weyll has beyn seyn,
Wemen may tempt the wysest at is wrocht.[13]
Your gret gentrice it sall nevir be for nocht.
We yow assure, our ost sall muff na thing,[14]
Quhyll[15] tym ye may send message fra your king.
Gyff it be sa at he accord and we,
Than for your saik it sall the bettir be.
Your Harroldys als sal saiffly cum and ga;
For your fredom we sall trowbill na ma.'
Scho thankit him off his grant mony sys,[16]
And all the ladyis apon a gudly wys.
Glaidly thai drank, the queyn and gud Wallace;
Thir ladyis als, and lordis in that place.
Hyr leyff scho tuk with out langar abaid;
Fyve myle that nycht south till a nonry[17] raid.
Apon the morn till London passit thai,
In Westmenster, quhar at the consaill lay:
Wallace ansuer scho gart schaw to the king.
It nedis nocht her rahers[18] mar off this thing.
The gret commend that scho to Wallace gaiff,
Befor the king, in presens off the laiff,
Till trew Scottis it suld gretly apples,[19]
Thocht Inglismen tharoff had litill es;[20]
Off worschip, wyt, manheid, and governans,
Off fredom, trewth; key off remembrans
Scho callyt him thar in to thair hye presens;
Thocht contrar thaim he stud at his defens.
'So chyftaynlik,' scho said, 'as he is seyn,
In till Inglande, I trow, has nevir beyn.
Wald ye off gold gyff him this rewmys[21] rent,
Fra honour he will nocht turn his entent.
Sufferyt we ar, quhill ye may message mak;
Off wys lordis sum part I reid[22] yow tak,
To purches pees, with outyn wordis mar;
For all Ingland may rew his raid full sayr.
Your harroldys als[23] to pass to him has leyff,
In all his ost thar sall no man thaim greiff.'

[1] know. [2] foolish. [3] snare. [4] Abashed. [5] settle. [6] agreed. [7] no honor is to be won. [8] responsibility. [9] rest. [10] speech. [11] beseeching.
[12] generosity. [13] that is made. [14] our host shall not move at all. [15] Till. [16] times. [17] nunnery [18] repeat. [19] please. [20] ease, comfort. [21] realm's. [22] advise. [23] also.

Than thankit thai the queyn for hir travaill;
The king, and lordis that was off his consaill.
Off hyr ansuer the king applessit was;
Than thre gret lordys thai ordand for to pass.
Thar consaill haill has fownd it was the best
Trewis to tak, or ellis thai get no rest.

LAMENT FOR WALLACE'S CAPTURE

(XI, 1109–28)

Allace, Scotland, to quhom sall thow compleyn!
Allace, fra payn quha sall the now restreyn!
Allace, thi help is fastlie brocht to ground,
Thi best chyftane in braith[1] bandis is bound!
Allace, thow has now lost thi gyd off lycht!
Allace, quha sall defend the in thi rycht?
Allace, thi payn approchis wondyr ner,
With sorow sone thow mon bene[2] set in feyr!
Thi gracious gyd, thi grettast governour,
Allace, our[3] neir is cumyn his fatell hour!
Allace, quha sall the beit[4] now off thi baill?[5]
Allace, quhen sall off harmys thow be haill?
Quha sal the defend? quha sall the now mak fre?
Allace, in wer quha sall thi helpar be?
Quha sall the help? quha sall the now radem?[6]
Allace, quha sall the Saxons fra the flem?[7]
I can no mar, bot besek God off grace
The to restor in haist to rychtwysnace;[8]
Sen gud Wallace may succour the no mar.
The loss off him encressit mekill cair.

THE DEATH OF WALLACE

(XI, 1305–1406)

On Wednysday the fals Sotheroun furth brocht,
Till martyr him as thai befor had wrocht.
Rycht suth it is, a martyr was Wallace,
Als Osauold, Edmunt, Eduuard, and Thomas.

Off men in armes led him a full gret rout.
With a bauld spreit gud Wallace blent[9] about:
A preyst he askyt, for God at deit[10] on tre.
King Eduuard than cummandyt his clerge,
And said; 'I charge, apayn[11] off loss off lyve,
Nane be sa bauld yon tyrand for to schryve.
He has rong[12] lang in contrar my hienace.'[13]
A blyst byschop sone, present in that place,
Off Canterbery he than was rychtwys lord,
Agayn the king he maid this rycht record;
And said; 'My selff sall her his confessioun,
Gyff I haiff mycht, in contrar off thi croun.
And[14] thou throu force will stop me off this thing,
I vow to God, quhilk is my rychtwys king,
That all Ingland I sall her enterdyt,
And mak it knawin thou art ane herretyk.
The sacrement of kyrk I sall him geiff;
Syn[15] tak thi chos, to sterve[16] or lat him leiff.[17]
It war mar waill,[18] in worschip off thi croun,
To kepe sic ane in lyff in thi bandoun,[19]
Than all the land and gud at thow has refyd.[20]
Bot covatice the ay fra honour drefyd.[21]
Thow has thi lyff rongyn[22] in wrangwis deid;
That sall be seyn on the, or on thi seid.'
The king gert[23] charge thai suld the byschop ta;[24]
Bot sad[25] lordys consellyt to lat him ga.
All Inglismen said, at his desyr was rycht;
To Wallace than he rakyt[26] in thar sicht,
And sadly hard his confessioun till ane end.
Humbly to God his spreyt he thar comend,
Lawly him servyt with hartlye devocioun
Apon his kneis, and said ane orysoun.
His leyff he tuk, and to West monastyr[27] raid.
The lokmen[28] than thai bur Wallace but baid[29]
On till a place, his martyrdom to tak;
For till his ded he wald no forthyr[30] mak.
Fra the fyrst nycht he was tane in Scotland,
Thai kepyt him in to that sammyn[31] band.

1 violent. 2 must be. 3 too. 4 cure thee. 5 harm. 6 redeem. 7 banish. 8 righteousness.

9 looked. 10 who died. 11 on pain. 12 reigned. 13 highness. 14 if. 15 then. 16 perish. 17 give him permission. 18 avail, advantage. 19 at thy mercy. 20 robbed. 21 drove. 22 reigned. 23 gave. 24 take. 25 serious. 26 went. 27 Westminster. 28 executioners. 29 bore Wallace without delay. 30 help. 31 same.

Na thing he had at suld haiff doyn[1] him gud;
Bot Inglismen him servit off carnaill fud.
Hys warldly lyff desyrd the sustenance,
Thocht he it gat in contrar off plesance.
Thai thirty dayis his band thai durst nocht slaik,
Quhill he was bundyn on a skamyll off ayk,[2]
With irn chenyeis[3] that was bath stark and keyn.
A clerk thai set to her quhat he wald meyn.[4]
'Thow Scot,' he said, 'that gret wrangis has don,
Thi fatell hour, thow seis, approchis son.
Thow suld in mynd remembyr thi mysdeid,
At clerkis may, quhen thai thair psalmis reid
For Crystyn saullis, that makis thaim to pray,
In thair nowmyr[5] thow may be ane off thai;
For now thow seis on fors thou mon decess.'[6]
Than Wallace said; 'For all thi roid raherss,[7]
Thow has na charge,[8] suppos at I did myss;
Yon blyst byschop has hecht[9] I sall haiff blis;
And I trew weill, at God sall it admyt:
Thi febyll wordis sall nocht my conscience smyt.
Conford I haiff off way that I suld gang,
Maist payn I feill at I bid her our lang.'[10]
Than said the clerk; 'Our king oft send the till;
Thow mycht haiff had all Scotland at thi will,
To hald off him, and cessyt off thi stryff;
So as a lord rongyn[11] furth all thi lyff.'
Than Wallace said; 'Thou spekis off mychty thing.
Had I lestyt,[12] and gottyn my rychtwys king,

[1] that should have done. [2] bench of oak. [3] iron chains. [4] moan. [5] number. [6] decease. [7] rude speech. [8] authority. [9] promised. [10] that I abide here too long. [11] reigned. [12] continued.

Fra worthi Bruce had rasavit his croun,
I thocht haiff maid Ingland at his bandoun.[13]
So uttraly it suld beyn[14] at his will,
Quhat plessyt him, to sauff thi king or spill.'[15]
'Weill,' said the clerk, 'than thow repentis nocht:
Off wykkydness thow has a felloun thocht.
Is nane in warld at has sa mony slane;
Tharfor till ask, me think thow suld be bane,[16]
Grace off our king, and syn at his barnage.'[17]
Than Wallace smyld a litill at his langage.
'I grant,' he said, 'part Inglismen I slew
In my quarrel, me thocht nocht halff enew.
I mowyt[18] na wer bot for to win our awin;[19]
To God and man the rycht full weill is knawin.
Thi frustyr[20] wordis dois nocht bot taris me,
I the commaund, on Goddis halff,[21] lat me be.'
A schyrray gart[22] this clerk son fra him pass;
Rycht as thai durst, thai grant quhat he wald as,[23]
A Psaltyr buk Wallace had on him evir;
Fra his childeid fra it wald nocht desevir.[24]
Bettyr he trowit in viage for to speid.
Bot than he was dispalyeid[25] off his weid.
This grace he ast at lord Clyffurd that knycht,
To lat him haiff his Psaltyr buk in sycht.
He gert a preyst it oppyn befor him hauld,
Quhill thai till him had done all at thai wauld.
Stedfast he red, for ocht thai did him thar:
Feyll[26] Sotheroun said, at Wallace feld na sayr.[27]
Gud devocioun sa was his begynnyng,
Conteynd tharwith, and fair was his endyng;
Quhill spech and spreyt at anys all can fayr[28]
To lestand[29] blyss, we trow, for evirmayr.

[13] in his power. [14] should have been. [15] destroy. [16] ready. [17] then from his baronage. [18] moved. [19] own. [20] vain. [21] for God's sake. [22] sheriff caused. [23] ask. [24] part. [25] despoiled. [26] many. [27] felt no pain. [28] did go. [29] lasting.

JAMES I OF SCOTS

THE KING'S QUAIR[1]

Heigh in the hevynnis figure circulere[2]
The rody sterrës twynklyng as the fyre;
And, in Aquary,[3] Cinthia[4] the clere,
Rynsid hir tressis like the golden wyre,
That late tofore, in faire and fresche atyre,
Through Capricorn heved hir hornis bright,
North northward approchit the myd-nyght;[5]

Quhen, as I lay in bed allone waking,
New partit[6] out of slepe a lyte tofore,[7]
Fell me to mynd of many diverse thing,
Off this and that; can I noght say quharfore,
Bot slepe for craft in erth[8] myght I no more;
For quhich as tho[9] coude I no better wyle,[10]
Bot toke a boke to rede apon a quhile:

Off quhich the name is clepit[11] properly
Boece, eftere him that was the compiloure,
Schewing [the] counsele of philosophye,
Compilit by that noble senatoure
Off Rome, quhilom[12] that was the warldis floure,
And from estate by fortune [for] a quhile
Forjugit[13] was to povert[14] in exile:

And there, to here this worthy lord and clerk,
His metir suete, full of moralitee;
His flourit pen so fair he set a-werk,
Discryving[15] first of his prosperitee,
And out of that his infelicitee;
And than how he, in his poetly report,[16]
In philosophy can him to confort.[17]

For quhich, (thogh[18] I, in purpose, at my boke,
To borowe a slepe at thilkë[19] tyme began),
Or ever I stent,[20] my best was more to loke
Upon the writing of this noble man,
That in him-self the full recover wan
Off his infortune, povert, and distresse,
And in tham set his verray sekernesse.[21]

And so the vertew of his youth before
Was in his age the ground of his delytis:
Fortune the bak him turnyt, and therfore
He maketh joye and comfort, that he quit is
Off thir unsekir[22] warldis appetitis;
And so aworth[23] he takith his penance,
And of his vertew maid it suffisance:

With mony a noble resoun, as him likit,
Enditing in his fairë Latyne tong,
So full of fruyte, and rethorikly pykit,[24]
Quhich to declare my scole[25] is ouer yong;
Therefore I lat him pas, and, in my tong,[26]
Procede I will agayn to my sentence
Off my mater, and leve all incidence.

The longë nyght beholding, as I saide,
Myn eyën gan to smert for studying;
My buke I schet, and at my hede it laide;
And doun I lay bot[27] ony tarying,
This matere newë in my mynd rolling;
This is to seyne[28] how that eche estate,
As Fortune lykith, thame will [oft] translate.

For sothe it is, that, on hir tolter[29] quhele,
Every wight cleverith in his stage,[30]
And failyng foting oft, quhen hir lest rele,[31]
Sum up, sum doun, is non estate nor age
Ensured, more the prynce [nor] than the page:
So uncouthly hir werdës[32] sche devidith,
Namly[33] in youth, that seildin[34] ought providith.

[1] book. [2] dome, firmament. [3] Aquarius. [4] MS. *Citherea*. [5] meridian. [6] roused. [7] a little before. [8] by any earthly means. [9] then. [10] knew I no better device. [11] called. [12] once. [13] Condemned. [14] poverty. [15] Describing. [16] narrative. [17] did comfort. [18] though. [19] that. [20] stopped. [21] security. [22] these uncertain. [23] at its value. [24] chosen. [25] skull, brain. [26] own language. [27] without. [28] say. [29] unstable. [30] clambers in his rank. [31] when she pleases to reel. [32] So strangely her fates. [33] Especially. [34] seldom.

Among thir thoughtis rolling to and fro,
Fell me to mynd of my fortune and ure;[1]
In tender youth how sche was first my fo,
And eft[2] my frende, and how I gat recure
Off my distresse, and all myn aventure
I gan oure-hayle,[3] that langer slepe ne rest
Ne myght I nat, so were my wittis wrest.[4]

For-wakit and for-walowit,[5] thus musing,
Wery, forlyin,[6] I lestnyt sodaynlye,
And sone I herd the bell to matyns ryng,
And up I rase, no langer wald I lye:
Bot now, how trowe ye? suich a fantasye
Fell me to mynd, that ay methoght the bell
Said to me, 'Tell on, man, quhat the befell.'

Thoght I tho[7] to my-self, 'Quhat may this be?
This is myn awin ymagynacioun;
It is no lyf[8] that spekis unto me;
It is a bell, or that impressioun
Off my thoght causith this illusioun,
That dooth me think so nycely[9] in this wise;'
And so befell as I schall you devise.[10]

Determyt furth therewith in myn entent,
Sen I thus have ymagynit of this soun,
And in my tyme more ink and paper spent
To lyte effect, I tuke conclusioun
Sum newë thing to write; I set me doun,
And furth-with-all my pen in hand I tuke,
And maid a ✠, and thus begouth[11] my buke.

Thou [sely][12] youth, of nature indegest,[13]
Unrypit fruyte with windis variable;
Like to the bird that fed is on the nest,
And can noght flee; of wit wayke and unstable,
To fortune both and to infortune hable;[14]
Wist thou thy payne to cum and thy travaille,
For sorow and drede wele myght thou wepe and waille.

[1] luck. [2] afterwards. [3] recalled. [4] tortured. [5] Worn out with waking and tossing. [6] tired with lying. [7] then. [8] person. [9] maketh me think so foolishly. [10] describe. [11] began. [12] innocent. [13] crude. [14] liable.

Thus stant[15] thy confort in unsekernesse,
And wantis it that suld the reule and gye:[16]
Ryght as the schip that sailith steröles[17]
Upon the rok[kis] most to harmës hye,[18]
For lak of it that suld bene hir supplye;[19]
So standis thou here in this warldis rage,
And wantis that suld gyde all thy viage.[20]

I mene this by my-self, as in partye;[21]
Though nature gave me suffisance[22] in youth,
The rypënesse of resoun lak[it] I
To governe with my will; so lyte I couth,[23]
Quhen steröles to travaile I begouth,[24]
Amang the wawis of this warld to drive;
And how the case, anon I will discrive.

With doubtfull hert, amang the rokkis blake,
My feble bote full fast to stere and rowe,
Helples allone, the wynter nyght I wake,
To wayte the wynd that furthward suld me throwe.[25]
O empti saile! quhare is the wynd suld blowe
Me to the port, quhar gynneth all my game?
Help, Calyope, and wynd, in Marye name!

The rokkis clepe[26] I the prolixitee
Off doubilnesse that doith[27] my wittis pall:
The lak of wynd is the deficultee
In enditing of this lytill trety small:
The bote I clepe the mater hole of all:
My wit, unto the saile that now I wynd[28]
To seke connyng,[29] though I bot lytill fynd.

At my begynnyng first I clepe and call
To yow, Cleo, and to yow, Polymye,
With Thesiphone,[30] goddis and sistris all,
In nowmer ix., as bokis specifye;
In this processe my wilsum[31] wittis gye;
And with your bryght lanternis wele convoye
My pen, to write my turment and my joye!

[15] stands. [16] guide. [17] helmless. [18] must hasten to harm. [19] help. [20] voyage. [21] mean this regarding myself, partly. [22] sufficient rank and means. [23] To govern my will with; so little I could. [24] began. [25] drive. [26] call. [27] maketh. [28] unfurl. (?) [29] skill. On this whole passage cf. Chaucer's *Troilus*, Bk. II., Proem.
[30] Tisiphone, a Fury. James, misled by a passage in Chaucer's *Troilus*, takes her for a Muse. [31] wilful.

In vere,[1] that full of vertu is and gude,
Quhen Nature first begynneth hir enprise,
That quhilum was be cruell frost and flude
And schouris scharp opprest in many wyse,
And Synthius[2] [be]gynneth to aryse
Heigh in the est—a morow[3] soft and suete—
Upward his course to drive in Ariete:

Passit mydday bot fourë grëis evin,[4]
Off lenth and brede his angel wingis bryght
He spred upon the ground doun fro the hevin;
That, for gladnesse and confort of the sight,
And with the tiklyng of his hete and light,
The tender flouris opnyt thame and sprad;
And, in thaire nature, thankit him for glad.

Noght fere passit the state of innocence,
Bot nere about the nowmer of yeris thre,[5]
Were it causit throu hevinly influence
Off Goddis will, or othir casualtee,
Can I noght say; bot out of my contree,
By thaire avise that had of me the cure,
Be see to pas, tuke I myn aventure.

Purvait of all that was us necessarye,
With wynd at will, up airly by the morowe,
Streight unto schip, no longere wold we tarye,
The way we tuke, the tyme I tald toforowe;[6]
With mony 'fare wele' and 'Sanct Iohne to borowe'[7]
Off falowe and frende; and thus with one assent
We pullit up saile, and furth oure wayis went.

Upon the wawis weltering to and fro,
So infortunate was us that fremyt[8] day,
That maugre, playnly, quhethir we wold or no,
With strong hand [as] by forse, schortly to say,
Off inymyis takin and led away
We werën all, and broght in thaire contree;
Fortune it schupe[9] non othir wayis to be.

[1] spring. [2] Cynthius, the sun. [3] in the morning. [4] degrees exactly (i.e. one hour). [5] i.e., about ten years old. [6] before. [7] for your protection. [8] strange, hostile. [9] destined.

Quhare as in strayte ward and in strong prisoun,
So fer-forth,[10] of my lyf the hevy lyne,
Without confort, in sorowe abandoun,
The secund sistere lukit hath to twyne,[11]
Nere by the space of yeris twise nyne;
Till Iupiter his merci list advert,[12]
And send confort in relesche[13] of my smert.

Quhare as in ward full oft I wold bewaille
My dedely lyf, full of peyne and penance,
Saing ryght thus, 'Quhat have I gilt, to faille[14]
My fredome in this warld and my plesance?
Sen every wight has thereof suffisance,
That I behold, and I a crëature
Put from all this—hard is myn aventure!

'The bird, the beste, the fisch eke in the see,
They lyve in fredome, everich[15] in his kynd;
And I a man, and lakkith libertee;
Quhat schall I seyne,[16] quhat resoun may I fynd,
That Fortune suld do so?' Thus in my mynd
My folk I wold argewe,[17] bot all for noght;
Was non that myght, that on my peynës rought.[18]

Than wold I say, 'Gif[19] God me had devisit
To lyve my lyf in thraldome thus and pyne,
Quhat was the cause that he [me] more comprisit[20]
Than othir folk to lyve in suich ruyne?
I suffer allone amang the figuris nyne,[21]
Ane wofull wrecche that to no wight may spede,[22]
And yit of euery lyvis[23] help hath nede.'

The longë dayës and the nyghtis eke
I wold bewaille my fortune in this wise,
For quhich, agane distresse confort to seke,
My custum was on mornis for to ryse
Airly as day; O happy exercise!
By the come I to joye out of turment.
Bot now to purpose of my first entent:—

[10] far forward. [11] i.e., Lachesis, spinner of life's thread, has seen to the spinning of mine. [12] pleased to turn. [13] relief. [14] How have I sinned so as to lose. [15] every one. [16] say. [17] argue with. [18] recked. [19] If. [20] included me more. [21] i.e., I am like a cipher, of no value to others and needing the help of every one. [22] give help. [23] person's.

Bewailing in my chamber thus allone,
Despeired of all joye and remedye,
For-tirit of my thoght,[1] and wo begone,
[Un]to the wyndow gan I walk in hye,
To se the warld and folk that went forby;[2]
As for the tyme, though I of mirthis fude
Myght have no more, to luke it did me gude.

Now was there maid fast by the touris wall
A gardyn faire, and in the corneris set
Ane herbere[3] grene: — with wandis long and small
Railit about; and so with treis set
Was all the place, and hawthorn hegis knet,
That lyf[4] was none walking there forby,
That myght within scarse ony wight aspye.

So thik the bewis[5] and the levës grene
Beschadit all the aleyes that there were,
And myddis every herbere myght be sene
The scharpë grenë suetë jenepere,[6]
Growing so faire with branchis here and there,
That, as it semyt to a lyf[7] without,
The bewis spred the herbere all about;

And on the smallë grenë twistis[8] sat
The lytill suetë nyghtingale, and song
So loud and clere, the ympnis[9] consecrat
Off lufis use,[10] now soft, now lowd among,
That all the gardyng and the wallis rong
Ryght of thaire song and of the copill[11] next
Off thaire suete armony, and lo the text:

CANTUS

'Worschippë, ye that loveris bene, this May,
For of your blisse the kalendis are begonne,
And sing with us, Away, winter, away!
Cum, somer, cum, the suete sesoun and sonne!
Awake for schame! that have your hevynnis wonne,
And amorously lift up your hedis all,
Thank lufe that list[12] you to his merci call.'

Quhen thai this song had song a lytill thrawe,[13]
Thai stent[14] a quhile, and therewith unaffraid,

As I beheld and kest myn eyne a-lawe,[15]
From bengh to beugh thay hippit[16] and thai plaid,
And freschly in thaire birdis kynd arraid
Thaire fetheris new, and fret[17] thame in the sonne,
And thankit lufe, that had thaire makis[18] wonne.

This was the planë ditee of thaire note,
And there-with-all unto my-self I thoght,
'Quhat lyf[19] is this that makis birdis dote?
Quhat may this be, how cummyth it of ought?[20]
Quhat nedith it to be so dere ybought?
It is nothing, trowe I, bot feynit chere,
And that men list to counterfeten chere.'

Eft[21] wald I think; 'O Lord, quhat may this be?
That Lufe is of so noble myght and kynde,
Lufing his folk, and suich prosperitee
Is it of him, as we in bukis fynd?
May he oure hertës setten[22] and unbynd?
Hath he upon oure hertis suich maistrye?
Or all this is bot feynyt fantasye!

For gif he be of so grete excellence,
That he of every wight hath cure and charge,
Quhat have I gilt[23] to him or doon offense,
That I am thrall, and birdis gone at large,
Sen[24] him to serve he myght set my corage?
And gif he be noght so, than may I seyne,[25]
Quhat makis folk to jangill of him in veyne?

Can I noght ellës fynd, bot gif that he
Be lord, and as a god may lyve and regne,
To bynd and louse, and maken thrallis free,
Than wold I pray his blisfull grace benigne,
To hable[26] me unto his service digne;[27]
And evermore for to be one of tho
Him trewly for to serve in wele and wo.

And there-with kest I doun myn eye ageyne,
Quhare as I sawe, walking under the toure,
Full secretly, new cummyn hir to pleyne,[28]
The fairest or the freschest yongë floure
That ever I sawe, me thoght, before that houre,

[1] Tired out with brooding. [2] past. [3] shrubbery. [4] person. [5] boughs. [6] juniper. [7] person. [8] twigs. [9] hymns. [10] liturgy. [11] couplet, verse. [12] is pleased. [13] time. [14] stopped. [15] below. [16] hopped. [17] adorned. [18] mates. [19] person. [20] at all. [21] Again. [22] make fast. [23] How have I sinned. [24] Since. [25] say. [26] fit. [27] worthy. [28] play.

For quhich sodayn abate,[1] anon astert [2]
The blude of all my body to my hert.

And though I stude abaisit tho a lyte,
No wonder was; for-quhy my wittis all
Were so overcom with plesance and delyte,
Onely throu latting of myn eyën fall,
That sudaynly my hert became hir thrall
For ever, of free will; for of manace
There was no takyn in hir suetë face.

And in my hede I drewe ryght hastily,
And eft-sonës [3] I lent it forth ageyne,
And sawe hir walk, that verray womanly,
With no wight mo, bot onely wommen tueyne.
Than gan I studye in my-self, and seyne,
'A! suete, ar ye a warldly crëature,
Or hevinly thing in likenesse of nature?

'Or ar ye god Cupidis owin princesse,
And cummyn are to louse me out of band?
Or ar ye verray Nature the goddesse,
That have depaynted with your hevinly hand
This gardyn full of flouris, as they stand?
Quhat sall I think, allace! quhat reverence
Sall I min[i]ster to your excellence?

'Gif ye a goddesse be, and that ye like
To do me payne, I may it noght astert; [4]
Gif ye be warldly wight, that dooth me sike, [5]
Quhy lest [6] God mak you so, my derrest hert,
To do a sely [7] prisoner thus smert,
That lufis yow all, and wote [8] of noght bot wo?
And therefor, merci, suete! sen it is so.'

Quhen I a lytill thrawe [9] had maid my moon,
Bewailling myn infortune and my chance,
Unknawin[g] how or quhat was best to doon,
So ferre I fallen [was] in lufis dance,
That sodeynly my wit, my contenance,
My hert, my will, my nature, and my mynd,
Was changit clene ryght in an-othir kynd.

Off hir array the form gif I sall write
Toward, hir goldin haire and rich atyre

1 Shock. 2 rushed. 3 soon after. 4 escape. 5 maketh me sigh. 6 Why pleased. 7 innocent. 8 knows. 9 while.

In fret-wise couchit [10] [were] with perllis quhite
And gretë balas lemyng [11] as the fyre,
With mony ane emeraut and faire saphire;
And on hir hede a chaplet fresch of hewe,
Off plumys partit [12] rede, and quhite, and blewe;

Full of quaking spangis bryght as gold,
Forgit of schap like to the amorettis, [13]
So new, so fresch, so plesant to behold,
The plumys eke like to the floure-jonettis, [14]
And othir of schap like to the [round crokettis], [15]
And, above all this, there was, wele I wote,
Beautee eneuch to mak a world to dote.

About hir nek, quhite as the fyre amaille, [16]
A gudely cheyne of smale orfeverye, [17]
Quhareby there hang a ruby, without faille,
Lyke to ane hertë schapin verily,
That, as a sperk of lowe, [18] so wantonly
Semyt birnyng upon hir quhytë throte;
Now gif there was gud partye, [19] God it wote!

And forto walk that freschë Mayës morowe,
An huke [20] sche had upon hir tissew [21] quhite,
That gudeliare had noght bene sene toforowe, [22]
As I suppose; and girt sche was a lyte.
Thus halflyng [23] louse for haste, to suich delyte
It was to see hir youth in gudelihede,
That for rudenes to speke thereof I drede.

In hir was youth, beautee, with humble aport, [24]
Bountee, richesse, and wommanly facture, [25]
(God better wote than my pen can report)
Wisedome, largesse, estate, and connyng [26] sure.
In every poynt so guydit hir mesure, [27]
In word, in dede, in schap, in contenance,
That nature myght no more hir childe avance.

10 ornamentally trimmed. 11 rubies glowing. 12 variegated. 13 Uncertain. Perhaps love-knots. 14 great St. John'swort. 15 Skeat's conjecture: "a sort of curled tuft." MS. repeats "floure-ionettis." 16 enamel made by fire. 17 goldsmith's work. 18 flame. 19 a good match. 20 loose upper dress. 21 garment of rich stuff. 22 before. 23 partly. 24 demeanor. 25 fashioning. 26 skill. 27 moderation guided her.

Throw quhich anon I knew and understude
Wele, that sche was a warldly crëature;
On quhom to rest myn eyë, so mich gude
It did my wofull hert, I yow assure,
That it was to me joye without mesure;
And, at the last, my luke unto the hevin
I threwe furthwith, and said thir[1] versis sevin:

'O Venus clere! of goddis stellifyit![2]
To quhom I yelde homage and sacrifise,
Fro this day forth your grace be magnifyit,
That me ressavit have in suich [a] wise,
To lyve under your law and do servise;
Now help me furth, and for your merci lede
My herte to rest, that dëis nere for drede.'

Quhen I with gude entent this orisoun
Thus endit had, I stynt a lytill stound;[3]
And eft[4] myn eye full pitously adoun
I kest, behalding unto hir lytill hound,
That with his bellis playit on the ground;
Than wold I say, and sigh there-with a lyte,
'A! wele were him that now were in thy plyte!'

An othir quhile the lytill nyghtingale,
That sat apon the twiggis, wold I chide,
And say ryght thus, 'Quhare are thy notis smale,
That thou of love has song this morowe-tyde?
Seis thou noght hire that sittis the be-syde?
For Venus sake, the blisfull goddesse clere,
Sing on agane, and mak my lady chere.

'And eke I pray, for all the paynës grete,
That, for the love of Proigne[5] thy sister dere,
Thou sufferit quhilom,[6] quhen thy brestis wete
Were with the terës of thyne eyën clere
All bludy ronne; that pitee was to here
The crueltee of that unknyghtly dede,
Quhare was fro the bereft thy maidenhede,

'Lift up thyne hert, and sing with gude entent;
And in thy notis suete the treson telle,
That to thy sister trewe and innocent
Was kythit[7] by hir husband false and fell;
For quhois gilt, as it is worthy wel,
Chide thir husbandis that are false, I say,
And bid thame mend, in the twenty devil way.[8]

'O lytill wrecch, allace! maist thou noght se
Quho commyth yond? Is it now tyme to wring?[9]
Quhat sory thoght is fallin upon the?
Opyn thy throte; hastow no lest[10] to sing?
Allace! sen thou of reson had felyng,
Now, suetë bird, say onës to me "pepe";
I dee for wo; me think thou gynnis slepe.

'Hastow no mynde of lufe? Quhare is thy make?[11]
Or artow seke, or smyt with jelousye?
Or is sche dede, or hath sche the forsake?
Quhat is the cause of thy malancolye
That thou no more list maken melodye?
Sluggart, for schame! lo here thy goldin houre,
That worth were hale[12] all thy lyvis labouré!

'Gyf thou suld sing wele ever in thy lyve,
Here is, in fay,[13] the tyme, and eke the space:
Quhat wostow than?[14] sum bird may cum and stryve
In song with the, the maistry to purchace.
Suld thou than cesse, it were grete schame, allace!
And here, to wyn gree[15] happily for ever,
Here is the tyme to syng, or ellis never.'

I thoght eke thus, gif I my handis clap,
Or gif I cast,[16] than will sche flee away;
And gif I hald my pes, than will sche nap;
And gif I crye, sche wate[17] noght quat I say:
Thus, quhat is best, wate I nought be this day:
Bot blawe wynd, blawe, and do the levis schake,
That sum twig may wag, and make hir to wake.

With that anon ryght sche toke up a sang,
Quhare come anon mo[18] birdis and alight;

[1] these. [2] made a star.
[3] stopped a little space, [4] afterwards.
[5] Progne, wife of Tereus, changed to a swallow.
[6] once upon a time.
[7] shown. [8] in every possible way. [9] grieve.
[10] desire. [11] mate. [12] wholly. [13] in faith. [14] What knowest thou then? [15] degree, superiority. [16] throw (anything). [17] knows. [18] more.

Bot than, to here the mirth was tham amang,
Over that to,[1] to see the suetë sicht
Off hyr ymage, my spirit was so light,
Me thoght I flawe[2] for joye without arest,
So were my wittis boundin all to fest.[3]

And to the notis of the philomene,
Quhilkis sche sang, the ditee there I maid
Direct to hire that was my hertis quene,
Withoutin quhom no songis may me glade;
And to that sanct, [there] walking in the schade,
My bedis[4] thus, with humble hert entere,
Devotly [than] I said on this manere.

'Quhen sall your merci rew upon your man,
Quhois service is yit uncouth[5] unto yow?
Sen,[6] quhen ye go, ther is noght ellis than
Bot, "Hert! quhere as[7] the body may noght throu,[8]
Folow thy hevin! Quho suld be glad bot thou,
That suich a gyde to folow has undertake?
Were it throu hell, the way thou noght forsake!"'[9]

And efter this, the birdis everichone[10]
Tuke up an othir sang full loud and clere,
And with a[11] voce said, 'Wele is us begone,[12]
That with oure makis are togider here;
We proyne[13] and play without dout and dangere,
All clothit in a soyte[14] full fresch and newe,
In lufis service besy, glad, and trewe.

'And ye, fresche May, ay mercifull to bridis,[15]
Now welcum be ye, floure of monethis all;
For noght onely your grace upon us bydis,
Bot all the warld to witnes this we call,
That strowit hath so playnly over all
With newë freschë suete and tender grene,
Oure lyf, oure lust,[16] oure governoure, oure quene.'

This was thair song, as semyt me full heye,[17]
With full mony uncouth suete note and schill,[18]
And therewith-all that faire[19] upward hir eye
Wold cast amang,[20] as it was Goddis will,
Quhare I myght se, standing allane full still,
The faire facture[21] that nature, for maistrye,[22]
In hir visage wroght had full lufingly.

And, quhen sche walkit had a lytill thrawe
Under the suetë grenë bewis bent,
Hir faire fresche face, as quhite as ony snawe,
Scho turnyt has, and furth hir wayis went;
Bot tho began myn axis[23] and turment,
To sene hir part,[24] and folowe I na myght;
Me thoght the day was turnyt into nyght.

Than said I thus, 'Quhare[un]to lyve I langer?
Wofullest wicht, and subject unto peyne!
Of peyne? no! God wote, ya: for thay no stranger
May wirken[25] ony wight, I dare wele seyne.
How may this be, that deth and lyf, bothe tueyne,
Sall bothe atonis[26] in a crëature
Togidder duell, and turment thus nature?

'I may noght ellis done bot wepe and waile,
With-in thir caldë wallis thus i-lokin;[27]
From hennësfurth my rest is my travaile;
My dryë thrist with teris sall I slokin,[28]
And on my-self bene al my harmys wrokin:[29]
Thus bute[30] is none; bot[31] Venus, of hir grace,
Will schape[32] remede, or do my spirit pace.[33]

'As Tantalus I travaile, ay but-les,[34]
That ever ylikë hailith at the well
Water to draw with buket botemles,
And may noght spede; quhois penance is an hell:
So by[35] my-self this tale I may wele telle,
For unto hir that herith noght, I pleyne;
Thus like to him my travaile is in veyne.'

So sore thus sighit I with my-self allone,
That turnyt is my strenth in febilnesse,

[1] Above that too. [2] flew. [3] bound all too fast. [4] prayers. [5] unknown. [6] Since. [7] that. [8] go through. [9] refuse thou not. [10] every one. [11] one. [12] Well is it with us. [13] preen. [14] one suit. [15] brides. [16] delight. [17] loud. [18] shrill. [19] fair one. [20] at times. [21] feature, aspect. [22] as a masterpiece. [23] access of fever. [24] see her depart. [25] affect. [26] at once. [27] locked. [28] slake. [29] wreaked. [30] remedy. [31] unless. [32] prepare. [33] make my spirit pass. [34] bootless. [35] regarding.

My wele in wo, my frendis all in fone,[1]
My lyf in deth, my lyght into dirknesse,
My hope in feere, in dout my sekirnesse;
Sen sche is gone: and God mote[2] hir convoye,
That me may gyde to turment and to joye!

The long[ë]day thus gan I prye and poure,
Till Phebus endit had his bemës bryght,
And bad go farewele every lef and floure,
This is to say, approch[en] gan the nyght,
And Esperus his lampis gan to light;
Quhen in the wyndow, still as any stone,
I bade[3] at lenth, and, kneling, maid my mone.

So lang till evin, for lak of myght and mynd,
For-wepit and for-pleynit[4] pitously,
Ourset so sorow had bothe hert and mynd,
That to the coldë stone my hede on wrye[5]
I laid, and lent, amaisit verily,
Half sleping and half suoun, in suich a wise:
And quhat I met,[6] I will you now devise.

Me thoght that thus all sodeynly a lyght
In at the wyndow come quhare that I lent,
Off quhich the chambere-wyndow schone full bryght,
And all my body so it hath ouerwent,
That of my sicht the vertew hale iblent;[7]
And that with-all a voce unto me saide,
'I bring the confort and hele,[8] be noght affrayde.'

And furth anon it passit sodeynly,
Quhere it come in, the ryghtë way ageyne,
And sone, me thoght, furth at the dure in hye[9]
I went my weye, nas nothing me ageyne;[10]
And hastily, by bothe the armës tueyne,
I was araisit up in-to the aire,
Clippit[11] in a cloude of cristall clere and faire.

Ascending upward ay fro spere to spere,
Through aire and watere and the hotë fyre,

[1] foes. [2] may. [3] abode. [4] Worn out with weeping and complaining. [5] awry. [6] dreamed. [7] wholly blinded. [8] healing. [9] haste. [10] there was nothing hindering me. [11] Enclosed.

Till that I come unto the circle clere
Off Signifere,[12] quhare fairë, bryght, and schire,[13]
The signis schone; and in the glade empire
Off blisfull Venus, [quhar] ane cryit now
So sudaynly, almost I wist noght how.

Off quhich the place, quhen [as] I com there nye,
Was all, me thoght, of cristall stonis wroght,
And to the port I liftit was in hye,
Quhare sodaynly, as quho sais[14] at a thoght,
It opnyt, and I was anon in broght
Within a chamber, largë, rowm,[15] and faire;
And there I fand of peple grete repaire.[16]

This is to seyne, that present in that place
Me thoght I sawe of every naciòun
Loveris that endit [had] thaire lyfis space
In lovis service, mony a mylioun,
Off quhois chancis[17] maid is mencioun
In diverse bukis, quho thame list to se;
And therefore here thaire namys lat I be.

The quhois aventure and grete labouris
Aboue thaire hedis writin there I fand;
This is to seyne, martris and confessouris,
Ech in his stage,[18] and his make[19] in his hand;
And there with-all thir peple sawe I stand,
With mony a solemp[ni]t contenance,
After[20] as lufe thame lykit to avance.

Off gudë folkis, that faire in lufe befill,[21]
There saw I sitt in order by thame one[22]
With hedis hore; and with thame stude Gude-will
To talk and play; and after that anon
Besydis thame and next there saw I gone[23]
Curage, amang the freschë folkis yong,
And with thame playit full merily and song.

And in ane othir stage, endlong[24] the wall,
There saw I stand, in capis wyde and lang,
A full grete nowmer; bot thaire hudis all,
Wist I noght quhy, atoure[25] thair eyen hang;
And ay to thame come Repentance amang,[26]

[12] i.e., the sphere of the zodiac. [13] clear. [14] as one may say. [15] spacious. [16] throng. [17] fortunes. [18] place. [19] mate. [20] According. [21] were fortunate in love. [22] by themselves. [23] go. [24] along. [25] over. [26] at times: or perhaps here in modern sense.

And maid thame chere, degysit in his wede:[1]
And dounward efter that yit I tuke hede;

Ryght overthwert[2] the chamber was there drawe
A trevesse[3] thin and quhite, all of plesance,
The quhich behynd, standing, there I sawe
A warld of folk, and by thaire contenance
Thaire hertis semyt full of displesance,
With billis[4] in thaire handis, of one assent
Unto the juge thaire playntis to present.

And there-with-all apperit unto me
A voce, and said, 'Tak hede, man, and behold:
Yonder thou seis the hiest stage and gree[5]
Off agit folk, with hedis hore and olde;
Yone were the folke that never changë wold
In lufe, bot trewly servit him alway,
In every age, unto thaire ending-day.

'For fro the tyme that thai coud understand
The exercise,[6] of lufis craft the cure,
Was non on lyve[7] that toke so moch on hand
For lufis sake, nor langer did endure
In lufis service; for, man, I the assure,
Quhen thay of youth ressavit had the fill,
Yit in thaire age tham lakkit no gude will.

'Here bene also of suich as in counsailis
And all thar dedis, were to Venus trewe;
Here bene the princis, faucht the grete batailis,
In mynd[8] of quhom ar maid the bukis newe;
Here ben the poetis that the sciencis knewe,
Throwout the warld, of lufe in thaire suete layes,
Suich as Ovide and Omere in thaire dayes.

And efter thame down in the nextë stage,
There as[9] thou seis the yongë folkis pleye:
Lo! thise were thay that, in thaire myddill age,
Servandis were to lufe in mony weye,
And diversely happinnit for to deye;
Sum soroufully, for wanting of thare makis,[10]
And sum in armës for thaire ladyes sakis.

'And othir eke by othir diverse chance,
As happin folk all day, as ye may se;
Sum for dispaire, without recoverance;
Sum for desyre, surmounting thaire degree;
Sum for dispite and othir inmytee;
Sum for unkyndënes without a quhy;[11]
Sum for to moch, and sum for jelousye.

'And efter this, upon yone stage adoun,
Tho that thou sëis stond in capis wyde;
Yone were quhilum[12] folk of religioun,
That from the warld thaire governance[13] did hide,
And frely servit lufe on every syde
In secrete, with thaire bodyis and thaire gudis.
And lo! quhy so thai hingen doun thaire hudis:

'For though that thai were hardy at assay,[14]
And did him service quhilum prively,
Yit to the warldis eye it semyt nay;
So was thaire service half[del] cowardy:[15]
And for thay first forsuke him opynly,
And efter that thereof had repenting,
For schame thaire hudis oure thaire eyne thay hyng.

'And seis thou now yone multitude, on rawe,[16]
Standing, behynd yone traverse of delyte?
Sum bene of tham that haldin were full lawe,
And take by frendis, nothing thay to wyte,[17]
In youth from lufe into the cloistere quite;
And for that cause are cummyn recounsilit,[18]
On thame to pleyne that so tham had begilit.

'And othir bene amongis thame also,
That cummyn ar to court, on lufe to pleyne,[19]
For he thaire bodyes had bestowit so,
Quhare bothe thaire hertës gruch[en] ther-ageyne;[20]
For quhich, in all thaire dayës, soth to seyne,[21]
Quhen othir lyvit in joye and [in] pleasance,
Thaire lyf was noght bot care and repentance;

[1] disguised in dress. [2] across. [3] curtain. [4] petitions. [5] degree. [6] practice. [7] alive. [8] memory. [9] Where. [10] mates.
[11] a why, a reason. [12] once. [13] conduct. [14] stout in trial. [15] half cowardice. [16] in a row. [17] blame. [18] restored (to their mates). [19] complain. [20] repined against it. [21] truth to say.

'And, quhare[1] thaire hertis gevin were and set,
Coplit with othir that coud noght accord;
Thus were thai wrangit that did no forfet,[2]
Departing[3] thame that never wold discord;
Off yongë ladies faire, and mony lord,
That thus by maistry were fro thair chose dryve,[4]
Full redy were thaire playntis there to gyve.'

And othir also I sawe compleynyng there
Upon Fortune and hir grete variance,
That quhere in love so wele they coplit were,
With thaire suete makis coplit in plesance,
Sche sodeynly maid thaire disseverance,
And tuke thame of this warldis compayne,
Withoutin cause, there was non othir quhy.[5]

And in a chierë of estate besyde,
With wingis bright, all plumyt bot his face,
There sawe I sitt the blyndë god Cupide,
With bow in hand, that bent full redy was,
And by him hang thre arowis in a cas,
Off quhich the hedis grundyn were full ryght,
Off diverse metals forgit faire and bryght.

And with the first, that hedit is of gold,
He smytis soft, and that has esy cure;
The secund was of silver, mony fold
Wers than the first, and harder aventure;[6]
The thrid, of stele, is schot without recure;[7]
And on his longë yalow lokkis schene[8]
A chaplet had he all of levis grene.

And in a retrete lytill of compas,
Depeyntit[9] all with sighis wonder sad,
Noght suich sighis as hertis doith manace[10]
Bot suich as dooth[11] lufaris to be glad,
Fond I Venus upon hir bed, that had
A mantill cast over hir schuldris quhite:
Thus clothit was the goddesse of delyte.

Stude at the dure Fair-calling, hir uschere,
That coude his office doon in connyng wise,
And Secretee, hir thrifty chamberere,
That besy was in tyme to do servise,
And othir mo[12] that I can noght (on) avise;[13]
And on hir hede, of rede rosis full suete,
A chapellet sche had, faire, fresch, and mete.[14]

With quaking hert astonate of that sight,
Unnethis[15] wist I quhat that I suld seyne;
Bot at the lastë febily, as I myght,
With my handis on bothe my knëis tueyne,
There I begouth[16] my caris to compleyne;
With ane humble and lamentable chere
Thus salute I that goddesse bryght and clere:

'Hye Quene of Lufe! sterre of benevolence!
Pitouse princes, and planet merciable![17]
Appesare of malice and violence!
By vertew pure of your aspectis hable,[18]
Unto youre grace lat now ben acceptable
My pure request, that can no forthir gone
To seken help, bot unto yow allone!

'As ye that bene the socoure and suete well
Off remedye, of carefull hertës cure,
And, in the hugë weltering wawis fell
Off lufis rage, blisfull havin and sure;
O anker and keye of our gude aventure,
Ye have your man with his gude will conquest;[19]
Merci, therefore, and bring his hert to rest!

'Ye knaw the cause of all my peynës smert
Bet than my-self, and all myn aventure
Ye may convoye, and as yow list, convert
The hardest hert that formyt hath nature:
Sen in your handis all hale[20] lyith my cure,
Have pitee now, O bryght blisfull goddesse,
Off your pure man,[21] and rew on his distresse!

'And though I was unto your lawis strange,
By ignorance, and noght by felonye,
And that your grace now likit hath to change
My hert, to serven yow perpetualye,
Forgeve all this, and shapith[22] remedye
To saven me of your benignë grace,
Or do me sterven[23] furth-with in this place.

[1] whereas. [2] misdeed. [3] Separating. [4] driven from their choice. [5] reason. [6] fortune. [7] recovery. [8] bright. [9] Painted. [10] doth menace hearts. [11] causeth. [12] more. [13] describe. [14] becoming. [15] Scarcely. [16] began. [17] merciful. [18] powerful. [19] conquered. [20] wholly. [21] poor servant. [22] prepare. [23] make me die.

'And with the stremës of your percyng lyght
Convoy my hert, that is so wo-begone,
Ageyne unto that suetë hevinly sight,
That I, within the wallis cald as stone,
So suetly saw on morow[1] walk and gone,
Law in the gardyn, ryght tofore myn eye:
Now, merci, Quene! and do me noght to deye.'

Thir wordis said, my spirit in dispaire,
A quhile I stynt, abiding efter grace:[2]
And there-with-all hir cristall eyën faire
Sche kest asyde, and efter that a space,
Benignëly sche turnyt has hir face
Towardis me full pleasantly conveide;
And unto me ryght in this wise sche seide:

'Yong man, the cause of all thyne inward sorowe
Is noght unknawin to my deite,
And thy request, bothe now and eke to-forowe,[3]
Quhen thou first maid professioun to me;
Sen of my grace I have inspirit the
To knawe my lawe, contynew furth, for oft,
There as I mynt[4] full sore, I smyte bot soft.

'Paciently thou tak thyne aventure,
This will[5] my sone Cupide, and so will I.
He can the stroke, to me langis[6] the cure
Quhen I se tyme; and therefor humily
Abyde, and serve, and lat Gude Hope the gye:[7]
Bot, for I have thy forehede here present,
I will the schewe the more of myn entent.

'This is to say, though it to me pertene
In lufis lawe the septre to governe,
That the effectis of my bemës schene
Has thaire aspectis by ordynance eterne,
With otheris byndand menës, to discerne
Quhilum in thingis bothe to cum and gone,
That langis noght to me to writh allone;[8]

'As in thyne awin case now may thou se,
For-quhy[9] lo, that [by] otheris influence
Thy persone standis noght in libertee;
Quharefore, though I geve the benevolence,
It standis noght yit in myn advertence,[10]
Till certeyne coursis endit be and ronne,
Quhill[11] of trew servis thow have hir graice i-wone.

'And yit, considering the nakitnesse
Bothe of thy wit, thy persone, and thy myght,
It is no mach, of thyne unworthynesse
To hir hie birth, estate, and beautee bryght:
Als like ye bene as day is to the nyght;
Or sek-cloth is unto fyne cremësye,[12]
Or doken[13] to the freschë dayësye.

'Unlike the mone is to the sonnë schene;
Eke Ianuarye is [un]like to May;
Unlike the cukkow to the phylomene;[14]
Thaire tabartis[15] ar noght bothe maid of array;[16]
Unlike the crow is to the papë-iay;[17]
Unlike, in goldsmythis werk, a fischis eye
To preise[18] with perll, or maked be so heye.

'As I have said, [now] unto me belangith
Specialy the cure of thy seknesse;
Bot now thy matere so in balance hangith,
That it requerith to thy sekernesse[19]
The help of othir mo that bene goddes,
And have in thame the menës and the lore,
In this matere to schorten with thy sore.[20]

'And for thou sall se wele that I entend
Un-to thy help, thy welefare to preserve,
The streightë weye thy spirit will I send
To the goddesse that clepit is Mynerve,
And se that thou hir hestis wele conserve,[21]
For in this case sche may be thy supplye,[22]
And put thy hert in rest, als wele as I.

'Bot, for the way is uncouth[23] unto the,
There as hir duelling is and hir sojurne,
I will that Gude Hope servand to the be,
Youre alleris[24] frend, to let the to murn,[25]
Be thy condyt and gyde till thou returne,
And hir besech that sche will, in thy nede,
Hir counsele geve to thy welefare and spede;

'And that sche will, as langith hir office,
Be thy gude lady, help and counseiloure,

[1] in the morning. [2] stopped, waiting to find grace. [3] formerly. [4] Where I make show of striking. [5] wishes. [6] belongs. [7] guide thee.
[8] The effects of my shining beams have, by eternal ordinance, their influences bound up with others; it is mine to discern at times things both future and past, which yet it is not my function to direct alone.
[9] Because. [10] control.
[11] Until. [12] crimson cloth. [13] dock. [14] nightingale. [15] coats. [16] of one pattern. [17] parrot. [18] value. MS. *prerese*. [19] security. [20] to shorten thy woe with. [21] keep her commands well. [22] help. [23] unknown. [24] Of you all. [25] to prevent thy mourning.

And to the schewe hir rype and gude avise,
Throw quhich thou may, be processe and laboure,
Atteyne unto that glad and goldyn floure,
That thou wald have so fayn with all thy hart.
And forthir-more, sen thou hir servand art,

'Quhen thou descendis doun to ground ageyne,
Say to the men that there bene resident,
How long think thay to stand in my disdeyne,
That in my lawis bene so negligent
From day to day, and list tham noght repent,
Bot breken louse, and walken at thaire large?[1]
Is nocht eft none that thereof gevis charge?[2]

'And for,' quod sche, 'the angir and the smert
Off thaire unkyndënesse dooth me constreyne
My femynyne and wofull tender hert,
That thau I wepe; and, to a token pleyne,
As of my teris cummyth all this reyne,
That ye se on the ground so fast ybete
Fro day to day, my turment is so grete.

'And quhen I wepe, and stynt anothir quhile,[3]
For pacience that is in womanhede,
Than all my wrath and rancoure I exile;
And of my cristall teris that bene schede,
The hony flouris growen up and sprede,
That preyen men, [as] in thaire flouris wise,[4]
Be trewe of lufe, and worschip my servise.

'And eke, in takin of this pitouse tale,
Quhen so my teris dropen on the ground,
In thaire nature the lytill birdis smale
Styntith thaire song, and murnyth for that stound;[5]
And all the lightis in the hevin round
Off my grevance have suich compacience,[6]
That from the ground they hiden thaire presence.

'And yit in tokenyng forthir of this thing,
Quhen flouris springis and freschest bene of hewe,
And that the birdis on the twistis sing,
At thilkë tyme ay gynnen folk renewe
That servis unto love, as ay is dewe,
Most[7] commonly has ay his observance,
And of thaire sleuth tofore[8] have repentance.

'Thus maist thou seyne, that myn effectis grete,
Unto the quhich ye aughten maist weye,[9]
No lyte[10] offense, to sleuth is [al] forget[11]:
And therefore in this wisë to tham seye,
As I the here have bid[den], and conveye
The matere all the better tofore[12] said;
Thus sall on the my chargë bene ilaid.

'Say on than, "Quhare is becummyn, for schame!
The songis new, the fresch carolis and dance,
The lusty lyf, the mony change of game,
The fresche array, the lusty contenance,
The besy awayte,[13] the hertly observance,
That quhilum was amongis thame so ryf?"
Bid tham repent in tyme, and mend thare lyf:

'Or I sall, with my fader old Saturne,
And with al hale[14] oure hevinly alliance,
Oure glad aspectis from thame writh[15] and turne,
That all the warld sall waile thaire governance.[16]
Bid thame betyme that thai have repentance,
And [with] thaire hertis hale renew my lawe;
And I my hand fro beting sall withdrawe.

'This is to say, contynew in my servise,
Worschip my law, and my name magnifye,
That am your hevin and your paradise;
And I your confort here sall multiplye,
And, for your meryt here, perpetualye
Ressave I sall your saulis, of my grace,
To lyve with me as goddis in this place.'

[1] at large.
[2] Is there not even one that gives heed to this? Perhaps *eft* (= again) should be *left*.
[3] again cease.
[4] in their flower fashion.
[5] space of time.
[6] compassion.
[7] Supply *who* before *most*.
[8] former.
[9] ought most to pay regard.
[10] little.
[11] for sloth is all forgotten.
[12] before.
[13] eager service.
[14] all whole.
[15] direct.
[16] bewail their conduct.

With humble thank, and all the reverence
That feble wit and connyng[1] may atteyne,
I tuke my leve; and from hir [hy] presence,
Gude Hope and I to-gider, bothë tueyne,
Departit are, and, schortly for to seyne,[2]
He hath me led [the] redy wayis ryght
Unto Minervis palace, faire and bryght.

Quhare as I fand, full redy at the yate,[3]
The maister portare, callit Pacience,
That frely lete us in, unquestionate;
And there we sawe the perfyte excellence,
The said renewe,[4] the state, the reverence,
The strenth, the beautee, and the ordour digne[5]
Off hir court riall, noble, and benigne.

And straught unto the presence sodeynly
Off dame Minerve, the pacient goddesse,
Gude Hope my gydë led me redily;
To quhom anon, with dredefull humylnesse,[6]
Off my cummyng the cause I gan expresse,
And all the processe hole, unto the end,
Off Venus charge, as likit hir to send.

Off quhich ryght thus hir ansuere was in bref:
'My son, I have wele herd, and understond,
Be thy reherse, the matere of thy gref,
And thy request to procure, and to fonde[7]
Off thy pennance[8] sum confort at my hond,
Be counsele of thy lady Venus clere,
To be with hir thyne help in this matere.

'Bot in this case thou sall wele knawe and witt,
Thou may thy hertë ground on suich a wise,
That thy laboure will be bot lytill quit;[9]
And thou may set it in [an]othir wise,
That wil be to the grete worschip and prise;
And gif thou durst unto that way enclyne,
I will the geve my lore and disciplyne.

'Lo, my gude sone, this is als mich to seyne,[10]
As, gif thy lufe [be] sett all uterly
On nycë lust,[11] thy travail is in veyne;
And so the end sall turne of thy folye
To payne and repentance; lo, wate thou quhy?[12]
Gif the ne list thy lufe on[13] vertew set,
Vertu sall be the cause of thy forfet.[14]

'Tak him before in all thy governance,
That in his hand the stere[15] has of you all;
And pray unto his hyë purveyance[16]
Thy lufe to gye, and on him traist and call,
That corner-stone and ground is of the wall
That failis noght; and trust, withoutin drede,
Unto thy purpose sone he sall the lede.

'For lo, the werk that first is foundit sure,
May better bere a pace[17] and hyare be
Than othir wise, and langere sall endure
Be monyfald, this may thy resoun see,
And stronger to defend[18] adversitee:
Ground [thou] thy werk, therefore, upon the stone,
And thy desire sall forthward with the gone.

'Be trewe, and meke, and stedfast in thy thoght,
And diligent hir merci to procure,
Noght onely in thy word; for word is noght,
Bot gif[19] thy werk and all thy besy cure[20]
Accord thereto, and utrid be mesure[21]
The place, the houre, the maner, and the wise;
Gif Mercy sall admitten thy servise.

'"All thing has tyme," thus sais Ecclesiaste;
And wele is him that his tyme wel abit.[22]
Abyde thy time; for he that can bot haste
Can noght of hap,[23] the wisë man it writ;
And oft gude fortune flourith with gude wit:
Quharefore, gif thou will [ay] be wele fortunyt,
Lat wisedom ay [un]to thy will be junyt.[24]

'Bot there be mony of so brukill[25] sort,
That feynis treuth in lufë for a quhile,

[1] skill. [2] shortly to say. [3] gate.
[4] Unsatisfactorily explained as "grave renewal."
[5] dignified. [6] timorous humility. [7] seek.
[8] suffering. [9] requited.

[10] as much as to say. [11] on foolish desire. [12] know thou why. [13] MS. *on lufe thy.* [14] disaster. [15] control. [16] providence. [17] step, stage (?). [18] resist. [19] Unless. [20] care. [21] and let the place, etc., be stated with moderation. [22] abideth. [23] Controls not fortune. [24] joined. [25] brittle, unreliable.

And setten all thaire wittis and disport [1]
The sely innocent woman to begyle,
And so to wynne thaire lustis with a wile;
Suich feynit treuth is all bot trechorye,
Under the umbre [2] of hid ypocrisye.

'For as the foulere quhistlith in his throte
Diversëly, to counterfete the brid,
And feynis mony a suete and strangë note,
That in the busk [3] for his desate [4] is hid,
Till sche be fast lokin his net amyd;
Ryght so the fatoure,[5] the false theif, I say,
With suete tresoun oft wynnith thus his pray.

'Fy on all suich! fy on thaire doubilnesse!
Fy on thaire lust and bestly appetite!
Thaire wolfis hertis, in lambis liknesse;
Thaire thoughtis blak, hid under wordis quhite;
Fy on thaire laboure! fy on thaire delyte!
That feynen outward all to hir honour,
And in thaire hert hir worschip [6] wold devoure.

'So hard it is to trusten now on dayes
The warld, it is so double and inconstant,
Off quhich the suth is kid be mony assayes; [7]
More pitee is; for quhich the remanant
That menen wele and ar noght variant
For otheris gilt ar [8] suspect of untreuth,
And hyndrit oft, and treuely that is reuth.

'Bot gif the hert be groundit ferm and stable
In Goddis law, thy purpose to atteyne,
Thy laboure is to me [ful] agreable;
And my full help, with counsele trew and pleyne,
I will the schewe, and this is the certeyne;
Opyn thy hert, therefore, and lat me se
Gif thy remede be pertynent to me.' [9]

'Madame,' quod I, 'sen it is your plesance
That I declare the kynd of my loving,
Treuely and gude, withoutin variance,
I [10] lufe that floure abufe all othir thing;
And wold bene he that to hir worschipping
Myght ought availe, be Him that starf on rude,[11]
And nouthir spare for travaile, lyf, nor gude.[12]

'And forthirmore, as touching the nature
Off my lufing, to worschip or to blame,
I darre wele say, and there-in me assure,
For ony gold that ony wight can name
Nald [13] I be he that suld of hir gude fame
Be blamischere in ony point or wyse,
For wele nor wo, quhill my lyfe may suffise.[14]

'This is theffect [15] trewly of myn entent,
Touching the suete that smertis me so sore,
Giff this be faynt,[16] I can it noght repent,
All though my lyf suld forfaut be therefore.
Blisful princes! I can seye you no more;
Bot so desire my wittis dooth compace,[17]
More joy in erth kepe [18] I noght bot your grace.'

'Desire,' quod sche, 'I nyl it noght deny,[19]
So thou it ground and set in Cristin wise;
And therefore, son, opyn thy hert playnly.'
'Madame,' quod I, 'trew withoutin fantise,[20]
That day sall never be I sall up-rise
For my delyte to covate the plesance
That may hir worschip [21] putten in balance.[22]

'For ovre all thing, lo, this were my gladnesse,
To sene the freschë beautee of hir face;
And gif I myght deservë, be processe,[23]
For my grete lufe and treuth, to stond in grace,
Hir worschip sauf,[24] lo, here the blisfull cace [25]
That I wold ask, and there [un]to attend,[26]
For my most joye unto my lyfis end.'

'Now wele,' quod sche, 'and sen [27] that it is so,
That in vertew thy lufe is set with treuth,
To helpen the I will be one of tho
From henësforth, and hertly without sleuth,
Off thy distresse and excesse to have reuth;
That has thy hert, I will [hir] pray full faire,
That Fortune be no more thereto contraire.

1 delight. 2 shade. 3 bush. 4 deceit. 5 deceiver. 6 honor. 7 the truth is shown by many proofs. 8 MS. *and*. 9 is my affair. 10 MS. *In*. 11 died on cross. 12 goods. 13 Would not. MS. *Wald*. 14 endure. 15 gist. 16 feigned (fault?). 17 overwhelm. 18 care for. 19 say it nay. 20 truly without deceit. 21 honour. 22 jeopardy. 23 in course of time. 24 Her honour safe. 25 lot. 26 expect, wait for. 27 since.

'For suth it is, that all ye crëaturis
Quhich under us beneth have your duellyng,
Ressaven diversely your aventuris,
Off quhich the cure and principall melling[1]
Apperit is,[2] withoutin repellyng,[3]
Onely to hir that has the cuttis[4] two
In hand,[5] bothe of your wele and of your wo.

'And how so be [it] that sum clerkis trete,
That all your chancë[6] causit is tofore
Heigh in the hevin, by quhois effectis grete
Ye movit are to wrething[7] lesse or more,
Thar[8] in the warld, thus calling that therefore
"Fortune," and so that the diversitee
Off thaire wirking suld cause necessitee;

'Bot othir clerkis halden that the man
Has in him-self the chose[9] and libertee
To cause his awin fortune, how or quhan
That him best lest, and no necessitee
Was in the hevin at his nativitee,
Bot yit the thingis happin in commune[10]
Efter purpose, so cleping thame "Fortune."

And quhare a persone has tofore knawing[11]
Off it that is to fall[en] purposely,
Lo, Fortune is bot wayke in suich a thing,
Thou may wele wit, and here ensample quhy;
To God, that is the first[ë] cause onely
Off every thing, there may no fortune fall:
And quhy? for he foreknawin is[12] of all.

'And therefore thus I say to this sentence;
Fortune is most and strangest[13] evermore,
Quhare lest[14] foreknawing or intelligence
Is in the man; and, sone, of wit or lore
Sen thou are wayke and feble, lo, therefore,
The more thou art in dangere[15] and commune[16]
With hir that clerkis clepen so Fortune.

'Bot for the sake, and at the reverence
Off Venus clere, as I the said tofore,
I have of thy distresse compacience;[17]
And in confort and relesche[18] of thy sore,
The schewit [have] here myn avise therefore;
Pray Fortune help, for mich unlikly thing
Full oft about sche sodeynly dooth bring.

'Now go thy way, and have gude mynde upon
Quhat I have said in way of thy doctryne.'[19]
'I sall, madame,' quod I; and ryht anon
I tuke my leve:—als straught as ony lyne,
With-in a beme, that fro the contree[20] dyvine
Sche, percyng throw the firmament, extendit,
To ground ageyne my spirit is descendit.

Quhare, in a lusty plane,[21] tuke I my way,
Endlang[22] a ryver, plesant to behold,
Enbroudin[23] all with freschë flouris gay,
Quhare, throu the gravel, bryght as ony gold,
The cristall water ran so clere and cold,
That, in myn erë maid contynualy
A maner soun, mellit[24] with armony;

That full of lytill fischis by the brym,
Now here, now there, with bakkis blewe as lede,
Lap[25] and playit, and in a rout can swym
So prattily, and dressit[26] tham to sprede
Thaire curall[27] fynnis, as the ruby rede,
That in the sonnë on thaire scalis bryght
As gesserant[28] ay glitterit in my sight:

And by this ilkë ryver-syde alawe[29]
Ane hyë way [thar] fand I like to bene,[30]
On quhich, on every syde, a longë rawe
Off treis saw I, full of levis grene,
That full of fruyte delitable were to sene,
And also, as it come unto my mind,
Off bestis sawe I mony diverse kynd:

The lyoun king, and his fere[31] lyonesse;
The pantere, like unto the smaragdyne;[32]
The lytill squerell, full of besynesse;
The slawë ase, the druggare beste of pyne[33];
The nycë[34] ape; the werely porpapyne;[35]
The percyng lynx; the lufare unicorne,[36]
That voidis[37] venym with his evoure[38] horne.

1 guidance (*lit.* meddling). 2 Appertains. 3 recall. 4 lots. 5 i.e., Fortune. 6 fate. 7 action. 8 MS. *Quhare.* 9 choice. 10 ordinarily. 11 previous knowledge. 12 previously aware. 13 strongest. 14 least. 15 in the power. 16 allied. 17 compassion. 18 assuagement. 19 teaching. 20 Skeat suggests *court.* 21 pleasant plain. 22 Along. 23 Embroidered. 24 A kind of sound, mingled. 25 Leapt. 26 addressed. 27 coral. 28 shining mail. 29 down by this same river-side. 30 like as it were. 31 companion. 32 emerald. 33 beast drudging painfully. 34 foolish. 35 bristling porcupine. 36 The unicorn was supposed to be subdued by virgins. 37 expels. 38 ivory.

There sawe I dresse[1] him new out of [his] haunt
The fery[2] tigere, full of felonye;
The dromydare; the standar[3] oliphant;
The wyly fox, the wedowis inemye;
The clymbare gayte;[4] the elk for alblastrye;[5]
The herknere bore;[6] the holsum grey for hortis;[7]
The haire also, that oft gooth to the wortis.[8]

The bugill,[9] draware by his hornis grete;
The martrik,[10] sable, foynyee,[11] and mony mo;
The chalk-quhite ermyn, tippit as the jete;
The riall hert, the conyng,[12] and the ro;
The wolf, that of the murthir noght say-[is] 'Ho!'[13]
The lesty[14] bever, and the ravin bare;[15]
For chamelot,[16] the camel full of hare;

With mony an othir beste diverse and straunge,
That cummyth noght as now unto my mynd.
Bot now to purpose, — straucht furth the range
I held a way, oure-hailing[17] in my mynd
From quhens I come, and quhare that I suld fynd
Fortune, the goddesse; unto quhom in hye
Gude Hope, my gyde, has led me sodeynly.

And at the last, behalding thus asyde,
A roundë place [y]wallit have I found;
In myddis quhare eftsone[18] I have [a]spide
Fortune, the goddesse, hufing[19] on the ground:
And ryght before hir fete, of compas round,
A quhele, on quhich [than] clevering I sye[20]
A multitude of folk before myn eye.

And ane surcote sche werit long that tyde,
That semyt [un]to me of diverse hewis,
Quhilum[21] thus, quhen sche wald [hir] turn asyde,
Stude this goddesse of fortune and [of glewis[22]];
A chapellet, with mony fresche anewis,[23]
Sche had upon her hed; and with this hong
A mantill on hir schuldris, large and long,

That furrit was with ermyn full quhite,
Degoutit with the self[24] in spottis blake:
And quhilum in hir chierë[25] thus a lyte[26]
Louring sche was; and thus sone it wold slake,
And sodeynly a maner smylyng make,
And[27] sche were glad; [for] at one contenance
Sche held noght, bot [was] ay in variance.

And underneth the quhelë sawe I there
Ane ugly pit, [was] depe as ony helle,
That to behald thereon I quoke for fere;
Bot o thing herd I, that quho there-in fell
Come no more up agane, tidingis to telle;
Off quhich, astonait of that ferefull syght,
I ne wist quhat to done, so was I fricht.[28]

Bot for to see the sudayn weltering
Off that ilk quhele, that sloppare[29] was to hold,
It semyt unto my wit a strangë thing,
So mony I sawe that than clymben wold,
And failit foting, and to ground were rold;
And othir eke, that sat above on hye,
Were overthrawe in twinklyng of an eye.

And on the quhelë was lytill void space,
Wele nere oure-straught[30] fro lawë [un]to hye;
And they were ware[31] that longë sat in place,
So tolter quhilum did sche it to-wrye;[32]
There was bot clymbe[n] and ryght dounward hye,
And sum were eke that fallen had [so] sore,
There for to clymbe thaire corage was no more.

I sawe also that, quhere [as] sum were slungin,
Be quhirlyng of the quhele, unto the ground,
Full sudaynly sche hath [thaim] up ythrungin,[33]
And set thame on agane full sauf and sound:
And ever I sawe a newë swarm abound,

[1] issue. [2] active. [3] standing. [4] climbing goat. [5] proof against missiles of the cross-bow. [6] heark'ning boar. [7] badger, [whose grease is good] for hurts. [8] vegetables. [9] ox. [10] marten. [11] beech-marten. [12] coney. [13] never ceases. [14] skilful. [15] ravening bear. [16] camlet cloth. [17] revolving. [18] soon after. [19] dwelling. [20] clambering I saw. [21] At times. [22] sports, freaks. [23] little rings. Fr. *anneau*.

[24] self-spotted. [25] cheer, demeanour. [26] a little. [27] If. [28] affrighted. [29] slippery. [30] very nearly covered. [31] wary. [32] So unsteadily at times she turned it about. [33] thrust them up.

That [thought] to clymbe upward upon the quhele,
In stede of thame that myght no langer rele.[1]

And at the last, in presence of thame all
That stude about, sche clepit[2] me be name;
And therewith apon knëis gan I fall
Full sodaynly hailsing,[3] abaist for schame;
And, smylyng thus, sche said to me in game,
'Quhat dois thou here? Quho has the hider sent?
Say on anon, and tell me thyn entent.

'I se wele, by thy chere and contenance,
There is sum thing that lyis the on hert,
It stant[4] noght with the as thou wald, perchance?'
'Madame,' quod I, 'for lufe is all the smert
That ever I fele, endlang and overthwert.[5]
Help, of your grace, me wofull wrechit wight,
Sen[6] me to cure ye powere have and myght.'

'Quhat help,' quod sche, 'wold thou that I ordeyne,
To bring[en] the unto thy hertis desire?'
'Madame,' quod I, 'bot[7] that your grace dedeyne,
Off your grete myght, my wittis to enspire,
To win[8] the well that slokin may the fyre
In quhich I birn; a, goddesse fortunate!
Help now my game, that is in point to mate.'[9]

'Off mate?' quod sche, 'O! verray sely[10] wrech,
I se wele by thy dedely coloure pale,
Thou art to feble of thy-self to streche
Upon my quhele, to clymbe[n] or to hale[11]
Withoutin help; for thou has fundin stale[12]
This mony day, withoutin werdis wele,[13]
And wantis now thy veray hertis hele.[14]

'Wele maistow be a wrechit man [y]callit,
That wantis the confort suld thy hert[ë] glade;
And has all thing within thy hert[ë] stallit[15]
That may thy youth oppressen or defade.[16]
Though thy begynnyng hath bene retrograde,
Be froward opposyt quhare till aspert,[17]
Now sall thai turn, and luke[n] on the dert.'[18]

And therewith-all unto the quhele in hye
Sche hath me led, and bad me lere[19] to clymbe,
Upon the quhich I steppit sudaynly.
'Now hald thy grippis,' quod sche, 'for thy tyme;
Ane houre and more it rynnis over prime;
To count the hole, the half is nere away;
Spend wele, therefore, the remanant of the day.

'Ensample,' quod sche, 'tak of this tofore,[20]
That fro my quhele be rollit as a ball;
For the nature of it is evermore,
After ane hicht, to vale[21] and geve a fall,
Thus, quhen me likith, up or doune to fall.
Fare wele,' quod sche, and by the ere me toke
So ernestly, that therewithall I woke.

O besy goste![22] ay flikering to and fro,
That never art in quiet nor in rest,
Till thou cum to that place that thou cam fro,
Quhich is thy first and verray proper nest:
From day to day so sore here artow drest,[23]
That with thy flesche ay walking[24] art in trouble,
And sleping eke; of pyne so has thou double.

Towart[25] my-self all this mene I to loke.
Though that my spirit vexit was tofore,
In suev[en]yng,[26] alssone as ever I woke,
By twenty fold it was in trouble more,
Bethinking me with sighing hert and sore,
That [I] nan othir thingis bot dremës had,
Nor sekernes,[27] my spirit with to glad.

[1] go round, roll. [2] called. [3] saluting. [4] stands. [5] along and across, through and through me. [6] since. [7] only. [8] reach. [9] on point of being checkmated. [10] helpless. [11] haul. [12] found stalemate. [13] goodness of fortune. [14] health.

[15] installed. [16] dispirit. [17] opposed by perverse men expert in this. [18] dirt. [19] learn. [20] these folk before (thee). [21] descend. [22] restless spirit. [23] art thou treated. [24] always while waking. [25] MS. *Couret.* [26] dreaming. [27] certainty.

And therewith sone I dressit[1] me to ryse,
Fulfild of thoght,[2] pyne, and adversitee;
And to my-self I said upon this wise;
'A! merci, Lord! quhat will ye do with me?
Quhat lyf is this? Quhare hath my spirit be?
Is this of my forethoght impressioun,
Or is it from the hevin a visioun?

'And gif ye goddis, of youre purviance,
Have schewit this for my reconforting,
In relesche[3] of my furiouse pennance,
I yow beseke full humily of this thing,
That of youre grace I myght have more takenyng,[4]
Gif it sal be as in my slepe before
Yo shewit have': and forth, withoutin more,

In hye unto the wyndow gan I walk,
Moving within my spirit of this sight,
Quhare sodeynly a turture,[5] quhite as calk,[6]
So evinly upon my hand gan lyght,
And unto me sche turnyt hir full ryght,
Off quham the chere in hir birdis aport[7]
Gave me in hert[ë] kalendis[8] of confort.

This fair[ë] bird ryght in hir bill gan hold
Of red jorofflis[9] with thair stalkis grene
A fair[ë] branche, quhare writtin was with gold,
On every list,[10] with branchis[11] bryght and schene
In compas fair, full plesandly to sene,
A plane sentence, quhich, as I can devise
And have in mynd, said ryght [up]on this wise.

'Awak! awake! I bring, lufar, I bring
The newis glad, that blisfull ben and sure
Of thy confort; now lauch, and play, and syng,
That art besid so glad an aventure;
For in the hevyn decretit is the cure.'[12]
And unto me the flouris fair present:[13]
With wyngis spred, hir wayis furth sche went.

Quhilk up a-none I tuke, and as I gesse,
Ane hundreth tymës, or[14] I forthir went,
I have it red, with hert[ë]full glaidnese;
And, half with hope, and half with dred, it hent,[15]
And at my beddis hed, with gud entent,
I have it fairë pynnit up, and this
First takyn was of all my help and blisse.

The quhichë treuly efter, day be day,
That all my wittis maistrit had tofore,
From henn[ë]sferth the paynis did away.
And schortly, so wele Fortune has hir bore,
To quikin treuly day by day my lore,[16]
To my larges that[17] I am cumin agayn,
To blisse with hir that is my sovirane.

Bot for als moche as sum micht think or seyne,
Quhat nedis me, apoun so litill evyn,[18]
To writt all this? I ansuere thus ageyne,
'Quho that from hell war croppin onys in hevin,[19]
Wald, efter o[20] thank, for ioy mak sex or sevin:
And every wicht his awin suete[21] or sore
Has maist in mynde': I can say you no more.

Eke quho may in this lyfe have more plesance
Than cum to largesse from thraldom and peyne,
And by the mene[22] of Luffis ordinance,
That has so mony in his goldin cheyne?
Quhich th[ink]is to wyn his hertis sovereyne,
Quho suld me wite[23] to write thar-of, lat se!
Now sufficiante is my felicitee.

Beseching unto fair Venus abufe,
For all my brethir that bene in this place,
This is to seyne, that servandis ar to Lufe,
And of his lady can no thank purchase,
His paine relesch,[24] and sone to stand in grace,
Boith to his worschip[25] and to his first ese;
So that it hir and resoun noght displese:

And eke for tham that ar noght entrit inne
The dance of lufe, bot thidder-wart on way,

[1] addressed. [2] anxiety. [3] lightening. [4] token. [5] turtle-dove. [6] chalk. [7] demeanor. [8] beginnings. [9] gillyflowers. [10] edge. [11] flourishes. [12] cure is decreed thee. [13] she presented. [14] ere. [15] took. [16] learning. [17] That to my freedom. [18] upon so small a foundation. [19] had once crept into heaven. [20] one. [21] sweet, happiness. [22] means. [23] blame. [24] relieve. [25] honour.

In gudë tyme and sely[1] to begynne
Thair prentissehed, and forthir-more I pray
For thame that passit ben the mony affray[2]
In lufe, and cummyn arn to full plesance,
To graunt tham all, lo! gude perseverance:

And eke I pray for all the hertis dull,
That lyven here in sleuth and ignorance,
And has no curage at the rose[3] to pull,
Thair lif to mend and thair saulis avance
With [hir][4] suete lore, and bring tham to gude chance;
And quho that will noght for this prayer turn,
Quhen thai wald faynest speid, that thai may spurn.[5]

To rekyn of every thing the circumstance,
As hapnit me quhen lessen gan my sore
Of my rancoure and [al my] wofull chance,
It war to long; I lat it be tharefor.
And thus this floure, I can seye [you] no more,
So hertly has unto my help attendit,
That from the deth hir man sche has defendit.

And eke the goddis mercifull wirking,[6]
For my long pane and trewe service in lufe,
That has me gevin halely myn asking,
Quhich has my hert for evir sett abufe
In perfyte joy, that nevir may remufe,
Bot onely deth: of quhom, in laud and prise,[7]
With thankfull hert I say richt in this wise: —

'Blissit mot[8] be the [heyë] goddis all,
So fair that glitteren in the firmament!
And blissit be thare myght celestiall,
That have convoyit hale, with one assent,
My lufe, and to [so] glade a consequent!
And thankit be Fortunys exiltree
And quhele, that thus so wele has quhirlit me!

'Thankit mot be, and fair and lufe befall
The nychtingale, that, with so gud entent,
Sang thare of lufe the notis suete and small,
Quhair my fair hertis lady was present,
Hir with to glad, or[9] that sche forthir went!
And thou gerafloure,[10] mot i-thankit be
All othir flouris for the lufe of the!

'And thankit be the fairë castell-wall,
Quhare as I quhilom lukit furth and lent!
Thankit mot be the sanctis marciall,[11]
That me first causit hath this accident.
Thankit mot be the grenë bewis[12] bent,
Throu quhom, and under, first fortunyt me[13]
My hertis hele,[14] and my confort to se!'[15]

For to the presence suete and delitable,
Rycht of this floure that full is of plesance,
By processe and by menys favorable,
First of the blisful goddis purveyance,
And syne[16] throu long and trew contynuance
Of veray faith in lufe and trew service,
I cum am, and [yit] forthir in this wise.

Unworthy, lo, bot onely of hir grace,
In lufis yok, that esy is and sure,
In guerdoun [eke] of all my lufis space,[17]
Sche hath me tak, hir humble crëature.
And thus befell my blisfull aventure,
In youth of lufe, that now, from day to day
Flourith ay newe; and yit forthir, I say: —

Go litill tretise, nakit of eloquence,
Causing simplese and povertee to wit;[18]
And pray the reder to have pacience
Of thy defaute, and to supporten it,[19]
Of his gudnese thy brukilnese to knytt,[20]
And his tong for to reule[n] and to stere,
That thy defautis helit may ben here.

Allace! and gif thou cummyst in presence,
Quhare-as of blame faynest thou wald be quite,[21]
To here thy rude and crukit eloquens,
Quho sal be thare to pray for thy remyt?[22]
No wicht, bot geve[23] hir merci will admytt
The for gud will, that is thy gyd and stere,[24]
To quham for me thou pitousely requere.[25]

[1] happy. [2] struggles. [3] The symbol of the object of love in the *Roman de la Rose*. [4] Venus's. MS. *thair*. [5] I pray that they may trip. [6] working. [7] praise. [8] may. [9] ere. [10] gillyflower. [11] saints of March. [12] boughs. [13] happened to me. [14] healing. [15] MS. *be*. [16] afterwards. [17] duration. [18] to be known. [19] to bear with it. [20] thy brokenness to piece together. [21] free. [22] excuse. [23] No person, unless. [24] pilot. [25] do thou piteously entreat.

And thus endith the fatall influence,
Causit from hevyn, quhare power is commytt
Of govirnance, by the magnificence
Of Him that hiest in the hevin sitt;[1]
To quham we thank that all oure [lif] hath writt,
Quho couth it red, agone syne mony a yere,
Hich in the hevynnis figure circulere.

Vnto [the] impnis[2] of my maisteris dere,
Gowere and Chaucere, that on the steppis satt
Of rethorike, quhill thai were lyvand here,
Superlative as poetis laureate,
In moralitee and eloquence ornate,
I recommend my buk in lynis sevin,
And eke thair saulis un-to the blisse of hevin.
Amen.

Quod explicit Jacobus Primus,
Scotorum Rex Illustrissimus.

GOOD COUNSEL[3]

Sen[4] throu vertew encressis dignite,
And vertew flour and rut is of noblay,[5]
Of ony weill or quhat estat thou be,
His steppis sew,[6] and dreid thee non effray:[7]
Exil al vice, and follow trewth alway:
Luf maist thy God, that first thy luf began,[8]
And for ilk[9] inch he wil thee quyt[10] a span.

Be not our[11] proud in thy prosperite,
For as it cumis, sa wil it pas away;
Thy tym to compt[12] is schort, thou may weill se,
For of green gres soun cumis walowit hay.
Labour in trewth, quhill licht is of the day.
Trust maist in God, for he best gyd thee can,
And for ilk inch he wil thee quyt a span.

Sen word is thrall, and thocht is only free,
Thou dant[13] thy tung, that power hes and may;
Thou steik[14] thyn een fra warldis vanite;
Refrein thy lust, and harkin quhat I say;
Graip or[15] thou slyd, and creip furth on the way;
Keip thy behest unto thy God and man,
And for ilk inch he wil thee quyt a span.

[1] sitteth. [2] hymns.
[3] This is Skeat's restoration of the text of a ballad found in the Bannatyne M.S., in M.S. Kk. 1. 5, in Cambridge University Library, and in *The Gude and Godlie Ballates*, 1578, in which last it is ascribed to King James I. [4] Since. [5] nobility.
[6] follow. [7] no terror for thyself.
[8] began by loving thee. [9] every. [10] requite.
[11] over. [12] when counted. [13] tame.
[14] close. [15] grope ere.

ROBERT HENRYSON

THE TESTAMENT OF CRESSEID

Ane doolie [1] sessoun to ane cairfull dyte
Suld correspond, and be equivalent.
Richt sa it wes quhen I began to wryte
This tragedie; the wedder richt fervent,[2]
Quhen Aries, in middis of the Lent,
Schouris of haill can fra the north discend,
That scantlie fra the cauld I micht defend.

Yit, nevertheles, within myne oratur [3]
I stude, quhen Titan had his bemis bricht
Withdrawin doun, and sylit under cure,[4]
And fair Venus, the bewtie of the nicht,
Uprais, and set unto the west full richt
Hir golden face, in oppositioun
Of god Phebus, direct discending doun.

Throw out the glas hir bemis brast [5] sa fair
That I micht se on everie syde me by
The northin wind had purifyit the air,
And sched the mistie cloudis fra the sky;
The froist freisit, the blastis bitterly
Fra Pole Artick come quhisling loud and schill,[6]
And causit me remufe aganis my will.

For I traistit that Venus, luifis quene,
To quhome sum tyme I hecht [7] obedience,
My faidit hart of lufe scho wald mak grene;
And therupon, with humbill reverence,
I thocht to pray hir hie magnificence;
Bot for greit cauld as than I lattit [8] was,
And in my chalmer to the fyre can pas.

Thocht lufe be hait,[9] yit in ane man of age
It kendillis nocht sa sone as in youtheid,
Of quhome the blude is flowing in ane rage,
And in the auld the curage doif [10] and deid;
Of quhilk the fire outward is best remeid:
To help be phisike quhair that nature faillit
I am expert — for baith I have assailit.[11]

I mend the fyre, and beikit [12] me about,
Than tuik ane drink my spreitis to comfort,
And armit me weill fra the cauld thairout:
To cut the winter nicht, and mak it schort,
I tuik ane quair,[13] and left all uther sport,
Writtin be worthie Chaucer glorious,
Of fair Creisseid and worthie Troylus.

And thair I fand, efter that Diomeid
Ressavit had that lady bricht of hew,
How Troilus neir out of wit abraid,[14]
And weipit soir, with visage paill of hew;
For quhilk wanhope [15] his teiris can renew,
Quhill [16] Esperus [17] rejoisit him agane:
Thus quhyle [18] in joy he levit, quhile [18] in pane.

Of hir behest he had greit comforting,
Traisting to Troy that scho suld mak retour,
Quhilk he desyrit maist of eirdly thing,
For quhy [19] scho was his only paramour;
Bot quhen he saw passit baith day and hour
Of hir ganecome,[20] than sorrow can oppres
His wofull hart in cair and hevines.

Of his distres me neidis nocht reheirs,
For worthie Chauceir, in the samin buik,
In gudelie termis, and in joly veirs,
Compylit hes his cairis, quha will luik.
To brek my sleip ane uther quair I tuik,
In quhilk I fand the fatall destenie
Of fair Cresseid, that endit wretchitlie.

Quha wait [21] gif all that Chauceir wrait was trew?
Nor I wait nocht gif this narratioun
Be authoreist, or fenyeit of the new [22]
Be sum poeit, throw his inventioun
Maid to report the lamentatioun
And wofull end of this lustie Creisseid;
And quhat distres scho thoillit,[23] and quhat deid.[24]

[1] doleful. [2] severe. [3] oratory. [4] concealed under cover. [5] burst. [6] shrill. [7] formerly I promised. [8] prevented. [9] hot. [10] dull (deaf). [11] tried. [12] basked. [13] quire, book. [14] started. [15] despair. [16] Till. [17] Esperance, hope. [18] sometimes — sometimes. [19] because. [20] again-coming. [21] knows. [22] newly feigned. [23] suffered. [24] death.

Quhen Diomed had all his appetyte,
And mair, fulfillit of this fair ladie,
Upon ane uther he set his haill delyte,
And send to hir ane lybell of repudie;
And hir excludit fra his companie.
Than desolait scho walkit up and doun,
And, sum men sayis, into the court commoun.

O, fair Cresseid! the floure and *A per se*
Of Troy and Grece, how was thow fortunait![1]
To change in filth all thy feminitie,
And be with fleschelie lust sa maculait,[2]
And go amang the Greikis air[3] and lait,
So giglotlike,[4] takand thy foull plesance!
I have pietie thow suld fall sic mischance.

Yit, nevertheles, quhat ever men deme or say
In scornefull langage of thy brukkilnes,[5]
I sall excuse, als far furth as I may,
Thy womanheid, thy wisdome, and fairnes:
The quhi[l]k Fortoun hes put to sic distres
As hir pleisit, and nathing throw the gilt
Of the, throw wickit langage to be spilt.

This fair lady, in this wyse destitute
Of all comfort and consolatioun,
Richt privelie, but[6] fellowschip, on fute
Disagysit passit far out of the toun
Ane myle or twa, unto ane mansioun,
Beildit[7] full gay, quhair hir father Calchas
Quhilk than amang the Greikis dwelland was.

Quhen he hir saw, the caus he can inquyre
Of hir cumming. Scho said, siching full soir,
'Fra[8] Diomeid had gottin his desyre
He wox werie, and wald of me no moir.'
Quod Calchas, 'Douchter, weip thow not thairfoir,
Peraventure all cummis for the best:
Welcum to me, thow art full deir ane gest.'

This auld Calchas, efter the law was tho,
Wes keiper of the tempill, as ane preist,
In quhilk Venus and hir sone Cupido
War honourit, and his chalmer was thame neist,
To quhilk Cresseid with baill aneuch[9] in breist
Usit to pas, hir prayeris for to say;
Quhill at the last, upon ane solempne day,

As custome was, the pepill far and neir,
Befoir the none, unto the tempill went
With sacrifice, devoit[10] in thair maneir.
But still Cresseid, hevie in hir intent,
In-to the kirk wald not hir self present,
For giving of[11] the pepill ony deming
Of hir expuls fra Diomeid the king;

Bot past into ane secreit orature,
Quhair scho micht weip hir wofull desteny.
Behind hir bak scho cloisit fast the dure,
And on hir kneis bair fell down in hy;[12]
Upon Venus and Cupide angerly
Scho cryit out, and said on this same wyse,
'Allace! that ever I maid yow sacrifice!

'Ye gave me anis ane devine responsaill[13]
That I suld be the flour of luif in Troy,
Now am I maid an unworthie outwaill,[14]
And all in cair translatit is my joy.
Quha sall me gyde? Quha sall me now convoy,
Sen I fra Diomeid, and nobill Troylus,
Am clene excludit, as abject odious?

'O fals Cupide, is nane to wyte[15] bot thow,
And thy mother, of lufe the blind goddess!
Ye causit me alwayis understand and trow
The seid of lufe was sawin in my face,
And ay grew grene throw your supplie[16] and grace.
Bot now, allace, that seid with froist is slane,
And I fra luifferis left, and all forlane.'[17]

Quhen this was said, doun in ane extasie,
Ravischit in spreit, intill ane dreame scho fell,
And be apperance hard,[18] quhair scho did ly,
Cupide the king ringand ane silver bell,
Quhilk men micht heir fra hevin unto hell;
At quhais sound befoir Cupide appeiris
The sevin Planetis, discending fra thair speheiris,

Quhilk hes power of all thing generabill[19]
To reull and steir be thair greit influence,

[1] fortuned, ordained. [2] stained. [3] early. [4] like a silly girl. [5] frailty. [6] without. [7] Decorated. [8] After. [9] enough. [10] devout. [11] Lest she should give. [12] haste. [13] answer (to prayer). [14] outcast. [15] blame. [16] support. [17] out of fashion. [18] heard. [19] that can be generated.

Wedder and wind, and coursis variabill.
And first of all, Saturne gave his sentence,
Quhilk gave to Cupide litill reverence,
Bot, as ane busteous [1] churle on his maneir,
Come crabitlie, with auster luik and cheir.

His face frosnit,[2] his lyre [3] was lyke the leid,
His teith chatterit and cheverit [4] with the chin,
His ene drowpit, how [5] sonkin in his heid,
Out of his nois the meldrop [6] fast can rin,
With lippis bla,[7] and cheikis leine and thin,
The ice-schoklis that fra his hair doun hang
Was wonder greit, and as ane speir als lang.

Atouir [8] his belt his lyart [9] lokkis lay
Felterit [10] unfair, ouirfret with froistis hoir;
His garmound and his gyis [11] full gay of gray;
His widderit weid [12] fra him the wind out woir,[13]
Ane busteous bow within his hand he boir;
Under his girdill ane flasche of felloun flanis,[14]
Fedderit with ice, and heidit with hailstanis.

Than Juppiter richt fair and amiabill,
God of the starnis in the firmament,
And nureis to all thing generabill,
Fra his father Saturne far different,
With burelie [15] face, and browis bricht and brent,[16]
Upon his heid ane garland, wonder gay,
Of flouris fair, as it had bene in May.

His voice was cleir, as cristall wer his ene,
As goldin wyre sa glitterand was his hair,
His garmound and his gyis full [gay] of grene,
With golden listis [17] gilt on everie gair;[18]
Ane burelie brand about his middill bair;
In his right hand he had ane groundin [19] speir,
Of his father the wraith fra us to weir.[20]

Nixt efter him come Mars, the god of ire,
Of strife, debait, and all dissensioun,
To chide and fecht, als feirs as ony fyre;
In hard harnes, hewmound,[21] and habirgeoun;
And on his hanche ane roustie fell fachioun,
And in his hand he had ane roustie sword;
Wrything his face with mony angrie word.

Schaikand his sword, befoir Cupide he come
With reid visage and grislie glowrand ene;
And at his mouth ane bullar [22] stude of fome,
Lyke to ane bair [23] quhetting his tuskis kene,
Richt tuilyeour lyke, but temperance in tene;[24]
Ane horne he blew with mony bosteous brag,
Quhilk all this warld with weir [25] hes maid to wag.

Than fair Phebus, lanterne and lamp of licht
Of man and beist, baith frute and flourisching,
Tender nureis, and banischer of nicht,
And of the warld causing be his moving
And influence lyfe in all eirdlie thing,
Without comfort of quhome, of force to nocht
Must all ga die that in this warld is wrocht.

As king royall he raid upon his chair,
The quhilk Phaeton gydit sum-tyme unricht,
The brichtness of his face, quhen it was bair,
Nane micht behald for peirsing of his sicht:
This goldin cart with fyrie bemes bricht
Four yokkit steidis full different of hew,
But bait [26] or tyring, throw the spheiris drew.

The first was soyr,[27] with mane als reid as rois,
Callit Eoye [28] into the Orient;

1 blustering. 2 wrinkled. 3 complexion. 4 shivered. 5 hollow. 6 mucus. 7 livid. 8 Over. 9 hoary. 10 matted. 11 mantle. 12 withered weeds. 13 wafted away. 14 a sheaf of cruel arrows. 15 goodly. 16 smooth. 17 edges. 18 gore. 19 sharpened. 20 ward.

21 helmet. 22 bubble-mass. 23 boar. 24 quarrelsome, without temperance in anger. 25 war. 26 Without pause. 27 sorrel. 28 Eöus, belonging to the dawn.

The secund steid to name hecht Ethios,
Quhitlie and paill, and sum deill ascendent;
The thrid Peros, right hait and richt fervent;
The feird was blak, [and] callit Phlegonie,
Quhilk rollis Phebus down into the sey.

Venus was thair present, that goddess [gay],
Her sonnis querrel for to defend, and mak
Hir awin complaint, cled in ane nyce array,
The ane half grene, the uther half sabill blak,
Quhyte hair as gold, kemmit and sched abak,
Bot in hir face semit greit variance,
Quhyles perfyte treuth, and quhyles inconstance.

Under smyling scho was dissimulait,
Provocative with blenkis[1] amorous,
And suddanely changit and alterait,
Angrie as ony serpent vennemous,
Richt pungitive with wordis odious:
Thus variant scho was, quha list tak keip,[2]
With ane eye lauch,[3] and with the uther weip.

In taikning[4] that all fleschelie paramour
Quhilk Venus hes in reull and governance,
Is sum tyme sweit, sum tyme bitter and sour,
Richt unstabill, and full of variance,
Mingit[5] with cairfull joy and fals plesance,
Now hait, now cauld, now blyith, now full of wo,
Now grene as leif, now widderit and ago.

With buik in hand than come Mercurius,
Richt eloquent and full of rethorie,
With polite termis and delicious,
With pen and ink to report all reddie,
Setting sangis[6] and singand merilie.
His hude was reid, heklit atouir[7] his croun,
Lyke to ane poeit of the auld fassoun.[8]

Boxis he bair with fine electuairis,
And sugerit syropis for digestioun,
Spycis belangand to the pothecairis,
With mony hailsum sweit confectioun,
Doctour in phisick, cled in ane skarlot goun,
And furrit weill, as sic ane aucht to be,
Honest and gude, and not ane word culd lie.

Nixt efter him come Lady Cynthia,
The last of all, and swiftest in hir spheir,
Of colour blak, buskit[9] with hornis twa,
And in the nicht scho listis best appeir;
Haw[10] as the leid, of colour nathing cleir;
For all hir licht scho borrowis at hir brother
Titan, for of hirself scho hes nane uther.

Hir gyse was gray, and full of spottis blak;
And on hir breist ane churle paintit full evin,
Beirand ane bunche of thornis on his bak,
Quhilk for his thift micht clim na nar[11] the hevin.
Thus quhen thay gadderit war thir Goddis sevin,
Mercurius they cheisit with ane assent
To be foirspeikar in the parliament.

Quha had bene thair, and liken for to heir
His facound[12] toung and termis exquisite,
Of rhetorick the prettick[13] he micht leir,[14]
In breif sermone ane pregnant sentence wryte:
Befoir Cupide veiling his cap alyte,[15]
Speiris the caus of that vocation;
And he anone schew[16] his intentioun.

'Lo,' (quod Cupide) 'quha will blaspheme the name
Of his awin god, outher in word or deid,
To all goddis he dois baith lak[17] and schame,
And suld have bitter panis to his meid;
I say this by yone wretchit Cresseid,
The quhilk throw me was sum tyme flour of lufe,
Me and my mother starklie can reprufe;

'Saying of hir greit infelicitie
I was the caus and my mother Venus;
Ane blind Goddes hir cald, that micht not se,
With sclander and defame injurious:
Thus hir leving unclene and lecherous
Scho wald returne on me and [on] my mother,
To quhome I schew my grace abone all uther.

[1] glances. [2] heed. [3] laughed. [4] tokening. [5] Mingled. [6] songs (to music). [7] fringed about. [8] fashion (cf. Chaucer's portrait).
[9] decked. [10] Wan, livid. [11] nearer. [12] eloquent. [13] practice. [14] learn. [15] a little. [16] shewed. [17] reproach.

'And sen[1] ye ar all sevin deificait,
Participant of devyne sapience,
This greit injure done to our hie estait,
Me-think with pane we suld mak recompence;
Was never to goddes done sic violence.
As weill for yow as for myself I say,
Thairfoir ga help to revenge I yow pray.'

Mercurius to Cupide gave answeir,
And said, 'Schir King, my counsall is that ye
Refer yow to the hiest planeit heir,
And tak to him the lawest of degre,
The pane of Cresseid for to modifie:[2]
As God Saturne, with him tak Cynthia.'
'I am content,' (quod he), 'to tak thay twa.'

Than thus proceidit Saturne and the Mone,
Quhen thay the mater rypelie had degest,
For the dispyte to Cupide scho had done,
And to Venus oppin and manifest,
In all hir lyfe with pane to be opprest,
And torment sair, with seiknes incurabill,
And to all lovers be abhominabill.

This dulefull sentence Saturne tuik on hand,
And passit doun quhair cairfull Cresseid lay,
And on hir heid he laid ane frostie wand;
Than lawfullie[3] on this wyse can he say:
'Thy greit fairnes, and all thy bewtie gay,
Thy wantoun blude, and eik thy goldin hair,
Heir I exclude fra the for evermair.

'I change thy mirth into melancholy,
Quhilk is the mother of all pensivenes;
Thy moisture and thy heit in cald and dry;
Thyne insolence, thy play and wantones
To greit diseis; thy pomp and thy riches
In mortall neid; and greit penuritie
Thow suffer sall; and as ane beggar die.'

O cruell Saturne! fraward and angrie,
Hard is thy dome, and too malitious:
On fair Cresseid quhy hes thow na mercie,
Quhilk was sa sweit, gentill, and amourous?
Withdraw thy sentence, and be gracious
As thow was never; so schawis thow thy deid,
Ane wraikfull[4] sentence gevin on fair Cresseid.

[1] since. [2] determine. [3] in accordance with the decision of the court. [4] revengeful.

Than Cynthia, quhen Saturne past away,
Out of hir sait discendit down belyve,[5]
And red ane bill on Cresseid quhair scho lay,
Contening this sentence diffinityve:
'Fra heit[6] of bodie I the now deprive,
And to thy seiknes sal be na recure,
But in dolour thy dayis to indure.

'Thy cristall ene minglit with blude I mak;
Thy voice sa cleir, unplesand, hoir, and hace;[7]
Thy lustie lyre[8] ouirspred with spottis blak,
And lumpis haw[9] appeirand in thy face;
Quhair thow cummis, ilk man sall fle the place;
This sall thow go begging fra hous to hous,
With cop and clapper lyke ane lazarous.'[10]

This doolie dreame, this uglye visioun
Brocht to ane end, Cresseid fra it awoik,
And all that court and convocatioun
Vanischit away. Than rais scho up and tuik
Ane poleist glas, and hir schaddow culd luik;
And quhen scho saw hir face sa deformait,
Gif scho in hart was wa aneuch, God wait![11]

Weiping full sair, 'Lo, quhat it is,' (quod sche)
'With fraward langage for to mufe and steir
Our craibit goddis, and sa is sene on me!
My blaspheming now have I bocht full deir;
All eirdly joy and mirth I set areir.[12]
Allace, this day! allace, this wofull tyde!
Quhen I began with my goddis for to chyde!'

Be this was said, ane chyld come fra the hall,
To warne Cresseid the supper was reddy;
First knokkit at the dure, and syne[13] culd call,
'Madame, your father biddis you cum in hy,[14]
He has mervell sa lang on grouf[15] ye ly,
And sayis, your prayers bene too lang sum deill,
The goddis wait all your intent full weill.'

[5] quickly. [6] heat. [7] hoar (old), and hoarse. [8] skin. [9] livid. [10] leper. [11] knows. [12] behind. [13] afterwards. [14] haste. [15] grovelling.

Quod scho, 'Fair chylde, ga to my father deir
And pray him cum to speik with me anone.'
And sa he did, and said, 'Douchter, quhat cheir?'
'Allace' (quod scho), 'father, my mirth is gone.'
'How sa?' (quod he) and scho can all expone,[1]
As I have tauld, the vengeance and the wraik,[2]
For hir trespas, Cupide on hir culd tak.

He luikit on hir uglye lipper[3] face,
The quhilk befor was quhite as lillie flour;
Wringand his handis, oftymes he said, allace,
That he had levit to se that wofull hour;
For he knew weill that thair was na succour
To hir seiknes, and that dowblit his pane;
Thus was thair cair aneuch betuix thame twane.

Quhen thay togidder murnit had full lang,
Quod Cresseid, 'Father, I wald not be kend;[4]
Thairfoir in secreit wyse ye let me gang
Unto yone hospitall at the tounis end;
And thidder sum meit for cheritie me send,
To leif upon; for all mirth in this eird[5]
Is fra me gane, sic is my wickit weird.'[6]

Than in ane mantill and ane bavar[7] hat,
With cop and clapper, wonder prively
He opnit ane secreit yett,[8] and out thair at
Convoyit hir, that na man suld espy,
Unto ane village half ane myle thairby;
Delyverit hir in at the spittail hous,
And daylie sent hir part of his almous.

Sum knew hir weill, and sum had na knawledge
Of hir, becaus scho was sa deformait
With bylis[9] blak ovirspred in hir visage,
And hir fair colour faidit and alterait.
Yit thay presumit, for hir hie regrait,[10]
And still murning, scho was of nobill kin:
With better will thairfoir they tuik hir in.

[1] expound. [2] wreaking. [3] festering, leprous. [4] known. [5] earth. [6] fate. [7] beaver. [8] gate. [9] boils. [10] grief.

The day passit, and Phebus went to rest,
The cloudis blak ouirquhelmit all the sky:
God wait gif Cresseid was ane sorrowfull gest,
Seeing that uncouth fair and herbery![11]
But[12] meit or drink scho dressit hir to ly
In ane dark corner of the hous allone;
And on this wyse, weiping, scho maid hir mone.

THE COMPLAINT OF CRESSEID

'O sop[13] of sorrow, sonken into cair!
O, cative[14] Creisseid! for now and ever mair
Gane is thy joy, and all thy mirth in eird;
Of all blythnes now art thow blaiknit bair;[15]
Thair is na salve may saif the of thy sair.
Fell is thy fortoun, wickit is thy weird;
Thy blys is baneist, and thy baill on breird;[16]
Under the eirth God gif I gravin wer,
Quhair nane of Grece nor yit of Troy micht heird.[17]

'Quhair is thy chalmer wantounlie besene,[18]
With burely[19] bed and bankouris browderit bene,[20]
Spycis and wyne to thy collatioun,
The cowpis all of gold and silver schene,
The sweit meitis, servit in plaittis clene,
With saipheron sals[21] of ane gude sessoun,[22]
Thy gay garmentis with mony gudely goun,
Thy plesand lawn pinnit with goldin prene?[23]
All is areir,[24] thy greit royall renoun.

'Quhair is thy garding with thir greissis gay,
And fresche flowris, quhilk the Quene Floray
Had paintit plesandly on everie pane,[25]
Quhair thow was wont full merilye in May
To walk and tak the dew be it was day,
And heir the merle and mavis mony ane,
With ladyis fair in carrolling[26] to gane,
And se the royal rinkis[27] in thair array,
In garmentis gay, garnischit on everie grane?[28]

[11] strange fare and lodging. [12] Without. [13] A sop is bread soaked in wine. Cressida is soaked in care. [14] caitiff, unfortunate. [15] blackened bare. [16] agrowing. [17] hear it. [18] gayly furnished. [19] goodly. [20] good embroidered tapestries. [21] saffron sauce. [22] seasoning. [23] pin. [24] behind. [25] leaf. [26] circular dances with song. [27] personages. [28] color.

'Thy greit triumphand fame and hie honour,
Quhair thow was callit of eirdlye wichtis flour —
All is decayit, thy weird is welterit so,[1]
Thy hie estait is turnit in darknes dour.[2]
This lipper ludge[3] tak for thy burelie bour,
And for thy bed tak now ane bunche of stro;
For waillit[4] wyne and meitis thow had tho,
Tak mowlit[5] breid, peirrie,[6] and ceder[7] sour:
Bot cop and clapper, now is all ago.

'My cleir voice and courtlie carrolling,
Quhair I was wont with ladyis for to sing,
Is rawk as ruik,[8] full hiddeous, hoir, and hace;
My plesand port, all utheris precelling —[9]
Of lustines[10] I was hald maist conding —[11]
Now is deformit the figour of my face —
To luik on it na leid[12] now lyking hes:
Sowpit in syte,[13] I say with sair siching,
Ludgeit amang the lipper leid,[14] Allace!

'O ladyis fair of Troy and Grece attend
My miserie, quhilk nane may comprehend,
My frivoll fortoun, my infelicitie,
My greit mischief, quhilk na man can amend;
Be war in tyme, approchis neir the end,
And in your mynd ane mirrour mak of me;
As I am now, peradventure that ye,
For all your micht, may cum to that same end,
Or ellis war,[15] gif ony war may be.

'Nocht is your fairnes bot ane faiding flour,
Nocht is your famous laud and hie honour
Bot wind inflat in uther mennis eiris;
Your roising[16] reid to rotting sall retour.
Exempill mak of me in your memour,
Quhilk of sic thingis wofull witnes beiris.
All welth in eird away as wind it weiris;
Be-war, thairfoir, approchis neir the hour;
Fortoun is fikkill, quhen scho beginnis and steiris.'[17]

[1] turned so. [2] heavy. [3] leper lodge. [4] choice. [5] mouldy. [6] perrie, pear-cider. [7] cider. [8] hoarse as rook. [9] excelling. [10] fairness. [11] excellent (condign). [12] man. [13] Sunk in grief. [14] leper people. [15] worse. [16] rosy. [17] stirs.

Thus chydand with her drerie destenye,
Weiping, scho woik the nicht fra end to end;
Bot all in vane; hir dule, hir cairfull cry,
Micht not remeid,[18] nor yit hir murning mend.
Ane lipper lady rais, and till hir wend,
And said, 'Quhy spurnis thow aganis the wall,
To sla thyself, and mend nathing at all?

'Sen thy weiping dowbillis bot thy wo,
I counsall the mak vertew of ane neid;
To leir to clap thy clapper to and fro,
And leir[19] efter the law of lipper leid.'
Thair was na buit,[20] bot furth with thame scho yeid,[21]
Fra place to place, quhill cauld and hounger sair
Compellit hir to be ane rank beggair.

That samin tyme of Troy the garnisoun,
Quhilk had to chiftane worthie Troylus,
Throw jeopardie of weir had strikken down
Knichtis of Grece in number marvellous:
With greit tryumphe and laude victorious
Agane to Troy richt royallie they raid,
The way quhair Cresseid with the lipper baid.[22]

Seing that companie, thai come all with ane stevin;[23]
Thay gaif ane cry, and schuik coppis gude speid;
Said, 'Worthie lordis, for Goddis lufe of hevin,
To us lipper part of your almous deid.'
Than to thair cry nobill Troylus tuik heid,
Having pietie, neir by the place can pas
Quhair Cresseid sat, not witting what scho was.

Than upon him scho kest up baith her ene,
And with ane blenk[24] it come into his thocht
That he sumtime hir face befoir had sene;
Bot scho was in sic plye[25] he knew hir nocht;
Yit than hir luik into his mynd it brocht
The sweit visage and amorous blenking
Of fair Cresseid, sumtyme his awin darling.

[18] remedy. [19] Probably a mistake for *live*. [20] help, boot. [21] went. [22] abode. [23] voice. [24] glance [25] such plight.

Na wonder was, suppois [1] in mynd that he
Tuik hir figure [2] sa sone, and lo! now quhy?
The idole of ane thing in cace [3] may be
Sa deip imprentit in the fantasy,
That it deludis the wittis outwardly,
And sa appeiris in forme and lyke estait
Within the mynd, as it was figurait.

Ane spark of lufe than till his hart culd spring,
And kendlit all his bodie in ane fyre,
With hait fevir ane sweit and trimbling
Him tuik, quhill he was reddie to expyre;
To beir his scheild his breist began to tyre;
Within ane quhyle he changit mony hew,
And, nevertheles, not ane ane uther knew.

For knichtlie pietie and memoriall
Of fair Cresseid, ane gyrdill can he tak,
Ane purs of gold, and mony gay jowall,
And in the skirt of Cresseid doun can swak: [4]
Than raid away, and not ane word [he] spak,
Pensive in hart, quhill he come to the toun,
And for greit cair oft syis [5] almaist fell doun.

The lipper folk to Cresseid than can draw,
To se the equall distributioun
Of the almous; but quhan the gold they saw,
Ilk ane to uther prevelie can roun, [6]
And said, 'Yone lord hes mair affectioun,
How ever it be, unto yone lazarous,
Than to us all; we knaw be his almous.'

'Quhat lord is yone,' (quod scho), 'have ye na feill, [7]
Hes done to us so greit humanitie?'
'Yes,' (quod a lipper man), 'I knaw him weill;
Schir Troylus it is, gentill and fre.' [8]
Quhen Cresseid understude that it was he,
Stiffer than steill thair stert ane bitter stound [9]
Throwout hir hart, and fell doun to the ground.

Quhen scho, ouircome with siching sair and sad,
With mony cairfull cry and cald 'Ochane!' [10]

Now is my breist with stormie stoundis stad, [11]
Wrappit in wo, ane wretch full will of wane:' [12]
Than swounit scho oft or scho culd refrane,
And ever in hir swouning cryit scho thus:
O, fals Cresseid, and trew knicht Troylus!

'Thy lufe, thy lawtie, [13] and thy gentilnes
I countit small in my prosperitie;
Sa elevait I was in wantones,
And clam upon the fickill quheill [14] sa hie;
All faith and lufe I promissit to the
Was in the self [15] fickill and frivolous:
O, fals Cresseid, and trew knicht Troilus!

'For lufe of me thow keipt gude continence,
Honest and chaist in conversatioun;
Of all wemen protectour and defence
Thou was, and helpit thair opinioun: [16]
My mynd in fleschelie foull affectioun
Was inclynit to lustis lecherous:
Fy, fals Cresseid! O, trew knicht Troylus!

'Lovers, be war, and tak gude heid about
Quhome that ye lufe, for quhome ye suffer paine;
I lat yow wit, thair is richt few thairout [17]
Quhome ye may traist to have trew lufe agane:
Preif [18] quhen ye will, your labour is in vaine;
Thairfoir, I reid ye tak thame as ye find,
For thay ar sad as widdercock [19] in wind,

'Becaus I knaw the greit unstabilnes,
Brukkil [20] as glas, into my self, I say,
Traisting in uther als greit unfaithfulnes,
Als unconstant, and als untrew of fay; [21]
Thocht sum be trew, I wait richt few are thay;
Quha findis treuth, lat him his lady ruse [22]:
Nane but my self, as now, I will accuse.'

Quhen this was said, with paper scho sat doun,
And on this maneir maid hir testament:
'Heir I beteiche [23] my corps and carioun
With wormis and with taidis [24] to be rent;
My cop and clapper, and myne ornament,

[1] although. [2] Had a mental picture of her. [3] perchance. [4] fling. [5] ofttimes. [6] whisper. [7] knowledge. [8] generous. [9] pang. [10] Ohone! alas! [11] bestead. [12] devoid of hope. [13] loyalty. [14] wheel (of Fortune). [15] were in themselves. [16] good fame. [17] existing. [18] Try. [19] sober as weather-vane. [20] Brittle. [21] faith. [22] praise. [23] bequeath. [24] toads.

And all my gold, the lipper folk sall have,
Quhen I am deid, to burie me in grave.

'This royall ring, set with this rubie reid,
Quhilk Troylus in drowrie[1] to me send,
To him agane I leif it quhan I am deid,
To mak my cairfull deid unto him kend:[2]
Thus I conclude schortlie, and mak ane end;
My spreit I leif to Diane, quhair scho dwellis,
To walk with hir in waist woddis and wellis.[3]

'O, Diomeid! thow hes baith broche and belt
Quhilk Troylus gave me in takning
Of his trew lufe'—and with that word scho swelt;[4]
And sone ane lipper man tuik of the ring,
Syne[5] buryit hir withouttin tarying:
To Troylus furthwith the ring he bair,
And of Cresseid the deith he can declair.

Quhen he had hard hir greit infirmitie,
Hir legacie and lamentatioun,
And how scho endit in sic povertie,
He swelt for wo, and fell doun in ane swoun;
For greit sorrow his hart to birst was boun:[6]
Siching full sadlie, said, 'I can no moir;
Scho was untrew, and wo is me thairfoir!'

Sum said he maid ane tomb of merbell gray,
And wrait hir name and superscriptioun,
And laid it on hir grave, quhair that scho lay,
In goldin letteris, conteining this ressoun:
'Lo, fair ladyis, Cresseid of Troyis toun,
Sumtyme countit the flour of womanheid,
Under this stane, late lipper, lyis deid!'

Now, worthie Wemen, in this ballet schort,
Made for your worschip and instructioun,
Of cheritie I monische and exhort,
Ming[7] not your lufe with fals deceptioun;
Beir in your mynd this schort conclusioun
Of fair Cresseid, as I have said befoir:
Sen scho is deid, I speik of hir no moir.

[1] courtship. [2] known. [3] fountains. [4] swooned, died. [5] Then. [6] ready. [7] Mingle.

THE FOX, THE WOLF, AND THE CADGER[8]

Quhilum[9] thair wynnit[10] in a wildernes,
As myne authour expreslie can declair,
Ane revand[11] wolf, that levit upoun purches[12]
On bestiall,[13] and maid him weill to fair;
Was nane sa big about him he wald spair,
And[14] he wer hungrie, outher for favour or feid,[15]
Bot in his wraith he werryit[16] thame to deid.[17]

Swa happynnit him in wetching, as he went,
To meit ane foxe in middis of the way;
He him foirsaw, and feinyeit to be schent,[18]
And with ane bek[19] he bad the wolf gud day.
'Welcum to me,' quod he, 'thow Russell[20] gray';
Syne loutit[21] doun, and tuik him be the hand.
'Ryse vp, Lowrence,[22] I leif the[23] for to stand.

'Quhair hes thow bene this sesoun fra my sicht?
Thow sall beir office, and my stewart be,
For thow can knap[24] doun caponis on the nicht,
And, lowrand law,[25] thow can gar hennis de.'
'Schir,' said the foxe, 'that ganis[26] not for me:
And I am rad,[27] gif thay me se on far,
That at my figure beist and bird will scar.'[28]

'Na,' quod the wolf, 'thow can in covert creip,
Upoun thy wame,[29] and hint[30] thame be the heid;
And mak ane suddane schow[31] upoun ane scheip,
Syne[32] with thy wappynnis wirrie him to deid.'
'Schir,' said the fox, 'ye knaw my rob is reid,[33]
And thairfoir thair will na [kyn] beist abide me,
Thocht I wald be sa fals as for to hide me.'

[8] Hawker. [9] Once upon a time. [10] dwelt. [11] plundering. [12] plunder. [13] farm live-stock. [14] If. [15] feud. [16] worried. [17] death. [18] pretended to be abashed. [19] bow. [20] red fellow (fox). [21] bent. [22] fox. [23] give thee leave. [24] snatch. [25] crouching low. [26] avails. [27] afraid. [28] be scared. [29] belly. [30] seize. [31] shove, push, spring. [32] Then. [33] robe is red.

'Yis,' quod the wolf, 'throw buskis[1] and throw breiris,
Law can thow lour to cum to thine intent.'
'Schir,' said the fox, 'ye wait[2] weill how it gais;
Ane lang space fra thame thay will feill my sent,[3]
Then will thay eschaip, suppois thay suld be schent;[4]
And I am schamefull for to cum behind thame
In to the feild, thocht I suld sleipand[5] find thame.'

'Na,' quod the wolf, 'thow can cum on the wind,
For everie wrink,[6] forsuith, thow hes ane wyle.'
'Schir,' said the fox, 'that beist ye micht call blind,
That micht not eschaip than fra me ane myle.
How micht I ane of thame that wyis[7] begile?
My tippit twa eiris, and my twa gray ene,
Garris me be kend[8] quhair I was never sene.'

'Than,' said the wolf, 'Lowrence, I heir the le,[9]
And castis for perrellis thy ginnes to defend;[10]
Bot all thy seinyes[11] sall not availl the,
About the busk with wayis thocht thow wend;
Falset[12] will fail ye ay at the latter end;
To bow at bidding, and byde not quhill thow brest,[13]
Thairfoir I gif the counsall for the best.'

'Schir,' said the fox, 'it is lenterne,[14] ye se;
I can not fische, for weitting of my feit,
To tak ane banestikkill[15]; thocht we baith suld de,
I haif na uther craft to win my meit;
Bot war it pasche,[16] that men suld pultrie eit,
As kiddis, lambes, or caponis in to ply,[17]
To beir your office than wald I not set by.'[18]

'Than,' said the wolf, in wraith, 'wenis[19] thow with wylis,
And with thy mony mowis[20] me to mat?[21]
It is ane auld dog, doutles, that thow begilis:
Thow wenis to draw the stra befoir the catt!'
'Schir,' said the fox, 'God wait, I mene not that;
For and I did, it war weill worth that ye
In ane reid raip[22] had tyit me till ane tre.

'Bot now I se he is ane fule, perfay,[23]
That with his maister fallis in ressoning;
I did bot till assay[24] quhat ye wald say;
God wait, my mynd was on ane uther thing;
I sall fulfill in all thing your bidding,
Quhat ever ye chairge, on nichtis or on dayis.'
'Weill,' quod the wolf, 'I wait weill quhat thow sayis.

'Bot yit I will thow mak to me ane aith,[25]
For to be leill attour all levand leid.'[26]
'Schir,' said the foxe, 'that ane word makis me wraith,
For now I se ye haif me at ane dreid;[27]
Yit sall I sweir, suppois it be not neid,
Be Iuppiter, and on pane of my heid,
I salbe trew to yow, quhill[28] I be deid.'

With that ane cadgear, with capill[29] and with creillis,[30]
Come carpand[31] furth; than Lowrence culd him spy.
The fox the flewar[32] of the fresche heiring feillis,
And to the wolf he roundis[33] prively:
'Schir, yone ar hering the cadgear caryis by;
Thairfoir I rid[34] that we se for sum wayis
To get sum fische aganis thir fasting dayis.

'Sen I am stewart, I wald we had sum stuff,
And ye ar silver seik,[35] I wait richt weill;
Thocht we wald thig[36] yone verray churlische chuff,[37]
He will not gif us ane hering of his creill,
Befoir yone churle on kneis thocht we wald kneill;

[1] bushes. [2] know. [3] scent. [4] even if they should be frightened. [5] sleeping. [6] trick. [7] way. [8] Cause me to be recognized. [9] lie. [10] seekest for dangers to excuse thy tricks. [11] excuses. [12] Falsehood. [13] do not wait till you are broken. [14] Lent. [15] stickleback. [16] Easter. [17] in good condition. [18] decline.

[19] thinkest. [20] jests. [21] defeat. [22] red, bloody rope. [23] in faith. [24] try. [25] oath. [26] loyal beyond all living people. [27] in doubt. [28] till. [29] horse. [30] panniers, baskets. [31] shouting. [32] smell. [33] whispers. [34] advise. [35] penurious. [36] beg. [37] miserly fellow.

Bot yit I trow alsone[1] that ye sall se,
Gif I can craft to bleir yone carlis ee.[2]

'Schir, ane thing is, and[3] we get of yone pelf,
Ye man tak travell[4] and mak us sum supple;[5]
For he that will not labour and help him self,
In to thir dayis, he is not worth ane fle;
I think to wirk as bessie[6] as ane be.
And ye sall follow ane litill efterwart,
And gadder hering, for that salbe your pairt.'

With that he kest ane compas far about,
And strawcht[7] him doun in middis of the way,
As he wer deid he feinyeit[8] him, but dout,[9]
And than upoun lenth unliklie[10] lay;
The quhite he turnit up of his ene tway;
His toung out hang ane hand braid[11] of his heid,
And still he lay, als straucht as he wer deid.

The cadgear fand the fox, and he was fane,[12]
And till him self this softlie can he say:
'At the nixt bait,[13] in faith, ye salbe flane,[14]
And of your skin I sall mak mittenis tway.'
He lap[15] about [him] lichtlie quhair he lay,
And all the trace[16] he trippit on his tais;[17]
As he had hard ane pyper play, he gais.

'Heir lyis,' quod he, 'the devill deid in a dyke.
Sic ane selcouth[18] saw I not this sevin yeir;
I trow ye haif bene tussillit with sum tyke,[19]
That garris[20] yow ly sa still withoutin steir:[21]
Schir foxe, in faith, ye ar deir welcum heir;
It is sum wyfis malisoun,[22] I trow,
For pultrie pyking,[23] that lichtit hes on yow.

'Thair sall na pedder,[24] for purs, nor yit for glufis,
Nor yit for pointis[25] pyke your pellet fra me;[26]
I sall of it mak mittenis to my lufis,[27]
Till hald my handis hait[28] quhair ever I be;
Till Flanderis sall it never saill the se.'
With that in hy,[29] he hint[30] him by the heillis,
And with ane swak[31] he swang him on the creillis.

Syne[32] be the heid the horss in hy hes hint;[33]
The fraudfull foxe thairto guid tent hes tane,[34]
And with his teith the stoppell,[35] or he stint,[36]
Pullit out, and syne the hering ane and ane
Out of the creillis he swakkit[37] doun gude wane.[38]
The wolf was war,[39] and gadderit spedilie;
The cadgear sang, 'Huntis up, up,' upoun hie.[40]

Yit at ane burne the cadgear luikit about;
With that the foxe lap quite the creillis fray;[41]
The cadgear wald haif raucht[42] the foxe ane rout,[43]
Bot all for nocht, he wan his hoill[44] that day.
Than with ane schout thus can the cadgear say:
'Abyde, and thow ane nekhering[45] sall haif,
Is worth my capill, creillis, and all the laif.'[46]

'Now,' quod the foxe, 'I schrew me and we meit:
I hard quhat thow hecht[47] to do with my skin.
Thy handis sall never in thay[48] mittenis tak heit,
And thow war hangit, carle, and all thy kin!
Do furth thy marcat;[49] at me thow sall not win;

[1] quickly. [2] If I know craft to deceive that fellow. [3] if. [4] must take pains. [5] support. [6] busy. [7] stretched. [8] feigned. [9] without doubt. [10] lay at length, helpless looking. [11] breadth. [12] glad. [13] baiting-place. [14] flayed. [15] leapt. [16] way. [17] toes. [18] strange thing. [19] worried by some dog. [20] makes. [21] stir. [22] curse. [23] stealing poultry. [24] pedlar. [25] laces. [26] do me out of your skin. [27] palms. [28] hot. [29] haste. [30] seized. [31] toss. [32] Then. [33] seized. [34] has taken careful note. [35] plug, lid. [36] ere he stopped. [37] threw. [38] to good purpose. [39] aware. [40] in a loud voice. [41] from. [42] reached. [43] blow. [44] hole. [45] A blow; also apparently specially large herring laid on the top or neck of the basket. Cf. ll. 165–168. [46] rest. [47] promised. [48] those. [49] market.

And sell thy hering thow hes thair till hie price,
Ellis thow sall win nocht on thy marchandice.'

The cadgear trimmillit for teyne[1] quhair that he stuid;
'It is weill worthie,' quod he, 'I want yone tyke,[2]
That had not in my hand sa mekle gude
As staf or sting,[3] yone truker[4] for to strike.'
With that lichtlie he lap out ouer ane dyke,
And hakkit doun ane staf, for he was tene,[5]
That hevie was and of the holyne[6] grene.

With that the fox unto the wolf culd wend,
And fand him be the hering, quhair he lyis;
'Schir,' said he than, 'maid I not fair defend?[7]
Ane wicht[8] man wantit never, and he war wyse;
Ane hardie hart is hard for to suppryis.'
Than said the wolf: 'Thow art ane berne[9] full bald,
And wyse at will, in gude tyme[10] be it tald.

'Bot quhat was yone the carle cryit on hie,
And schuik his hand, quod he, hes thow na feill?'[11]
'Schir,' said the foxe, 'that I can tell trewlie;
He said the nekhering was in the creill.'
'Kennis thow that hering?' 'Ye, schir, I ken it weill,
And at the creill mouth I had it thryis[12] but dout;
The wecht[13] thair of neir tit[14] my tuskis out.

'Now, surelie, schir, mycht we that hering fang,[15]
It wald be fische to us thir fourtie dayis.'
Than said the wolf, 'Now God nor that I hang,[16]
Bot to be thair I wald gif all my clays,[17]
To se gif that my wappynnis[18] micht it rais.'
'Schir,' said the foxe, 'God wait, I wischit yow oft,
Quhen that my teith micht not beir it on loft.

'It is ane side of salmond, as it wair,
And callour,[19] pypand like ane pertrik ee;[20]
It is worth all the hering ye haif thair,
Ye, and we had it swa, is it worth sic thre.'
'Than,' said the wolf, 'quhat counsale gevis thow me?'
'Schir,' said the foxe, 'wirk efter my devyis,
And ye sall haif it, and tak yow na suppryis.[21]

'First, ye mon cast ane compas far about,
Syne straucht yow doun in middis of the way;
Baith heid, and feit, and taill ye man streik[22] out,
Hing furth your toung, and clois weill your ene tway;
Syne se your heid on ane hard place ye lay;
And dout[23] not for na perrell may appeir,
Bot hald yow clois quhen that the carle cummis neir.

'And thocht ye se ane staf, haif ye na dout,
Bot hald yow winder[24] still in to that steid;[25]
And luik your ene be clois, as thay war out,
And se that ye schrink nouther fute nor heid:
Than will the cadgear carle trow ye be deid,
And in till haist[26] will hint yow be the heillis,
As he did me, and swak yow on his creillis.'

'Now,' quod the wolf, 'I sweir the be my thrift,
I trow yone cadger carle he will me beir.'[27]
'Schir,' said the foxe, 'on loft he will yow lift,
Upoun his creillis, and do him litill deir.[28]
Bot ane thing dar I surelie to yow sweir,
Get ye that hering sicker[29] in sum place,
Ye sall not fair in fisching[30] mair quhill pasche.

'I sall say *In principio* upoun yow,
And cros your corpis frome the top to tay;
Wend quhen ye will, I dar be warrand now
That ye sall die na suddane deith this day.'
With that the wolf gird up sone and to gay,[31]

[1] trembled for vexation. [2] I well deserved to miss that fox. [3] pole. [4] swindler. [5] angry. [6] holly. [7] defence. [8] brave. [9] fellow. [10] indeed. [11] idea. [12] thrice. [13] weight. [14] tugged. [15] get hold of. [16] God grant that I hang. [17] clothes. [18] weapons, teeth. [19] fresh. [20] shining like the eye of a partridge. [21] no surprise take you. [22] stretch. [23] fear. [24] wonderfully. [25] place. [26] in haste. [27] Ed. Charteris reads, *dow not me beir*, dare not lift me. [28] harm, trouble. [29] secure. [30] go a-fishing. [31] goes.

And kest ane compas about the cadger far;
Syne straucht him in the gait,[1] or he come nar.

He laid his halfheid[2] sicker hard and sad,[3]
Syne straucht his foure feit fra him, and his heid,
And hang his toung furth as the foxe him bad;
Als still he lay, as he war verray deid,
Rakkand[4] na thing of the carlis favour nor feid,[5]
Bot ever upoun the nekhering he thinkis,
And quite forgetis the foxe and all his wrinkis.

With that the cadger, wavering as the wind,
Come rydand on the laid,[6] for it was licht,
Thinkand ay on the foxe that was behind,
Upoun quhat wyse revengit on him he micht;
And at the last of the wolf gat ane sicht,
Quhair he in lenth lay streikit in the gait;
Bot gif he lichtit doun, or not, God wait![7]

'Softlie,' he said. 'I was begilit anis;[8]
Be I begilit twyis, I schrew us baith,
That evill bot[9] sall licht upoun thy banis,
He suld haif had that hes done me the skaith.'[10]
On hicht he hovit the stalf,[11] for he was wraith,
And hit him with sic will upoun the heid,
Quhill neir he swonit and swalt[12] in to that steid.[13]

Thre battis he buir,[14] or he his feit micht find,
Bot yit the wolf was wicht, and wan away.
He micht not se, he wes sa verray blind,
Nor wit[15] reddilie quhether it wes nicht or day.
The foxe beheld that service quhair he lay,
And leuch on loft,[16] quhen he the wolf sa seis,
Baith deif and dosirnit,[17] fall swounand on his kneis.

He that of ressoun can not be content,
Bot covetis all, is abill all to tyne.[18]

The foxe, quhen that he saw the wolf wes schent,[19]
Said to him selff, 'Thir hering sal be myne';
I le, or ellis he was efterwart fyne[20]
That fand sic wayis his maister for to greif:
With all the fische thus Lowrence tuik his leif.

The wolf was neir weill dungin to the deid,[21]
That uneith[22] with his lyfe away he wan,
For with the bastoun[23] weill brokin wes his heid.
The foxe in to his den sone drew him than,
That had betraisit[24] his maister and the man:
The ane wantit the hering of his creillis,
The utheris blude was rynnand ouer his heillis.

MORALITAS

This taill is mingit[25] with moralitie,
As I sall schaw sum quhat, or that I ceis:[26]
The foxe unto the warld may likkinnit be,
The revand wolf unto ane man but leis,[27]
The cadger deith, quhome under all men preis:[28]
That ever tuik lyfe throw cours of kynd[29] man[30] die,
As man, and beist, and fische in to the see.

The warld, ye wait, is stewart to the man,
Quhilk makis man to haif na mynd of deid,[31]
Bot settis for wynning all the craft thay can;
The hering I likkin unto the gold sa reid,
Quhilk gart the wolf in perrell put his heid:
Richt swa the gold garris landis and cieteis
With weir[32] be waistit, daylie as men seis.

And as the foxe with dissimulance and gile
Gart the wolf wene[33] to haif worschip for ever,
Richt swa this warld with vane gloir for ane quhile
Flatteris with folk, as thay suld failye never,
Yit suddandlie men seis it oft dissever;
With thame that trowis oft to fill the sek,[34]
Deith cummis behind and nippis thame be the nek.

1 stretched himself in the road. 2 side of his head. 3 solid. 4 recking. 5 feud. 6 load. 7 knows. 8 once. 9 reward. 10 harm. 11 On high he raised the staff. 12 died. 13 place. 14 blows he bore. 15 know. 16 laughed aloud. 17 dazed. 18 lose.
19 defeated. 20 subtle. 21 beaten to death. 22 scarcely. 23 stick. 24 betrayed. 25 mixed. 26 ere I stop. 27 truly. 28 contend. 29 nature. 30 must. 31 death. 32 war. 33 expect. 34 sack.

The micht of gold makis mony men sa blind,
That settis on averice thair felicitie,
That thay forget the cadger cummis behind
To stryke thame, of quhat stait so ever thay be.
Quhat is mair dirk [1] than blind prosperitie?
Quhairfoir I counsall michtie men to haif mynd
Of the nekhering, interpreit in this kynd.

THE TALE OF THE UPLANDISH [2] MOUSE AND THE BURGESS [3] MOUSE

Esope, myne author, makis mentioun
Of twa myis, and thay wer sisteris deir,
Of quham the eldest dwelt in ane borrous [4] toun,
The uther wynnit uponland, weill neir,[5]
Solitar, quhyle under busk, quhyle under breir,
Quhylis in the corne, and uther mennis skaith,[6]
As outlawis dois and levis on thair waith.[7]

This rurall Mous in to the wynter tyde
Had hunger, cauld, and tholit [8] greit distres.
The uther Mous that in the burgh can byde
Wes gild brother and maid ane free burgess;
Toll fre als, but custum [9] mair or les,
And fredome had to ga quhair ever scho list,
Amang the cheis in ark,[10] and meill in kist.[11]

Ane tyme quhen scho wes full and unfute sair,[12]
Scho tuik in mynde hir sister uponland,
And langit for to heir of hir weilfair,
To se quhat lyfe scho had under the wand [13];
Bairfute, allone, with pykestalf in hir hand,
As pure [14] pilgryme scho passit out of toun,
To seik hir sister baith ouer daill and doun.

Furth mony wilsum [15] wayis can scho walk
Throw mosse and muir, throw bankis, balk,[16] and breir,

[1] dark. [2] country. [3] town. [4] borough. [5] dwelt in the country right near. [6] harm. [7] hunting. [8] suffered. [9] without taxes. [10] box. [11] chest. [12] unfootsore, comfortable. [13] in the open. [14] A very. [15] wild. [16] ridge.

Scho ranne with mony ane hiddeous quaik,[17]
'Cum furth to me, my awin sister deir,
Cry peip anis!' [18] With that the mous cryit, 'heir,'
And knew her voce, as kinnisman will do,
Be verray kynd;[19] and furth scho come hir to.

The hartlie joy, God! gif ye had sene,
Beis kith [20] quhen that thir sisteris met;
And greit kyndenes was schawin thame betuene;
For quhylis thay leuch, and quhylis for joy thay gret,[21]
Quhyle kissit sweit, quhylis in armis plet;[22]
And thus thay fure, quhill [23] soberit wes thair mind,
Syne fute for fute [24] unto the chalmer wend.

As I hard say, it was ane sober wane,[25]
Of fog [26] and fairn full febillie was maid,
Ane sillie scheill [27] under ane steidfast stane,
Of quhilk the entres was not hie nor braid;
And in the samin [28] thay went but mair abaid,[29]
Without[in] fyre or candill birnand bricht,
For commounlie sic pykeris [30] lufes not licht.

Quhen thay wer lugit thus, thir selie [31] myse,
The youngest sister unto hir butterie yeid,
And brocht furth nuttis and candil insteid of spyce;
Gif this wes gude fair, I do it on thame besyde.[32]
The burges mous prompit [33] furth in pryde,
And said, 'Sister, is this your daylie fude?'
'Quhy not,' quod scho, 'is not this meit rycht gude?'

'Na, be my saull, I think it bot ane scorne.'
'Madame,' quod scho, 'ye be the mair to blame;
My mother said, sister, quhen we were borne,
That I and ye lay baith within ane wame:[34]
I keip the rate [35] and custume of my dame,
And of my leving in to povertie,[36]
For landis haif we nane in propertie.'

[17] scream. [18] once. [19] instinct. [20] shown. [21] wept. [22] folded. [23] fared till. [24] keeping step. [25] dwelling. [26] moss. [27] A frail shelter (sheiling). [28] into the same. [29] without more delay. [30] stealers. [31] these innocent. [32] let them judge (?) [33] started. [34] womb. [35] style. [36] my being left poor.

'My fair sister,' quod scho, 'haif me excusit,
This rude dyet and I can nocht accord;
Till tender meit my stomok is ay usit,
For quhylis I fair als weill as ony lord;
Thir widderit[1] peis and nuttis, or thay be bord,[2]
Will brek my teith, and mak my wame full sklender,[3]
Quhilk wes befoir usit to meittis tender.'

'Weill, weill, sister,' quod the rurall Mous,
'Gif it pleis yow, sic thingis as ye se heir,
Baith meit and drink, barberie and hous,
Sal be your awin, will ye remane all yeir;
Ye sall it haif with blyith and merie cheir,
And that suld mak the maissis[4] that ar rude,
Amang freindis, richt tender and wonder gude.

'Quhat plesure is in feistis delicate,
The quhilkis ar gevin with ane glowmand[5] brow?
Ane gentill hart is better recreat
With blyith curage, than seith[6] till him ane kow:
Ane modicum is mair for till allow,[7]
Swa that gude will be kerver at the dais,
Than thrawin[8] will and mony spyeit mais.'

For all hir merie exhortatioun,
This burges mous had lytill will to sing,
Bot hevilie scho kest hir browis doun,
For all the daynteis that scho culd hir bring.
Yit at the last scho said, half in hething,[9]
'Sister, this victuall and your royall feist
May weill suffice unto ane rurall beist.

'Lat be this hole, and cum into my place;
I sall to yow schaw be experience
My Gude Fryday is better nor your Pace;[10]
My dische weschingis is worth your haill[11] expence;
I haif housis anew[12] of greit defence;
Of cat nor fall-trap I haif na dreid.'
'I grant,' quod scho; and on togidder thay yeid.[13]

In stubbill array[14] throw [rankest] gers[15] and corne,
And under buskis[16] prevelie couth they creip,
The eldest wes the gyde and went beforne,
The younger to hir wayis tuke gude keip.[17]
On nicht thay ran, and on the day can sleip;
Quhill in the morning, or the laverock[18] sang,
Thay fand the toun, and in blythlie couth gang.

Nocht fer fra thyne[19] unto ane worthie wane[20]
This burges brocht thame sone quhar thai suld be;
Without God speid[21] thair herberie wes tane,
Into ane spence[22] with vittell greit plentie;
Baith cheis and butter upone thair skelfis hie,[23]
And flesche and fische aneuch, of freshe and salt,
And sekkis full of meill and eik of malt.

Efter quhen thay disposit wer to dyne,
Withouttin grace thay wesche[24] and went to meit,
With all the coursis that cukis culd devyne,
Muttoun and beif strikin in tailyeis greit;[25]
And lordis fair thus couth thay counterfeit,
Except ane thing — thay drank the watter cleir
Insteid of wyne; bot yit thay maid gude cheir.

With blyith upcast and merie countenance,
The eldest sister sperit at hir gaist,[26]
Gif that scho be ressone fand difference
Betuix that chalmer and hir sarie[27] nest,
'Ye, dame,' quod scho, 'how lang will this lest?'
'For evermair, I wait,[28] and langer to.'
'Gif it be swa, ye ar at eis,' quod scho.

Til eik[29] thair cheir ane subcharge[30] furth scho brocht,
Ane plait of grottis[31] and ane dische full of meill;

[1] These withered. [2] ere they are bored. [3] belly full lean. [4] messes, food. [5] glooming, sullen. [6] boil. [7] is more to be esteemed. [8] perverse. Harl. reads *thrawin vult*, ill-tempered face. [9] scorn. [10] Easter. [11] whole. [12] enough. [13] went.

[14] Bannatyne MS. reads *In skugry ay*, In concealment ever. [15] grass. [16] bushes. [17] heed. [18] lark. [19] thence. [20] dwelling. [21] i.e., without greeting their hosts. [22] larder. [23] shelves high. [24] washed. [25] cut in great slices. [26] asked of her guest. [27] sorry. [28] wot. [29] To increase. [30] second course. [31] hulled oats.

Thraf caikkis[1] als I trow scho spairit nocht,
Aboundantlie about hir for to deill;
And mane[2] full fyne scho brocht insteid of geill,[3]
And ane quhyte candill out of ane coffer stall,[4]
Insteid of spyce to gust[5] thair mouth withall.

Thus maid thay merie quhil[6] thay micht na mair,
And, 'Haill, Yule, haill!' cryit upon hie.
Yit efter joy oftymes cummis cair,
And troubill efter greit prosperitie,
Thus as thay sat in all thair jolitie,
The spenser[7] come with keyis in his hand,
Opinnit the dure, and thame at denner fand.

Thay taryit nocht to wesche, as I suppose,
But on to ga quha that micht formest win.
The burges had ane hoill, and in scho gois,
Hir sister had na hoill to hyde hir in;
To se that selie mous it wes greit syn,
So desolate and will of ane gude reid;[8]
For veray dreid scho fell in swoun neir deid.

Bot as God wald, it fell ane happy cace;
The spenser had na laser[9] for to byde,
Nouther to seik nor serche, to sker[10] nor chace,
Bot in he went, and left the dure up wyde.
The bald burges his passing weill hes spyde;
Out of hir hoill scho come and cryit on hie,
'How fair ye sister? Cry peip, quhair-ever ye be!'

This rural Mous lay flatling on the ground,
And for the deith scho wes full sair dreadand,[11]
For till hir hart straik mony wofull stound;[12]
As in ane fever scho trimbillit fute and hand;
And quhan hir sister in sic ply[13] hir fand,
For verray pietie scho began to greit,[14]
Syne confort hir with wordis humbill and sweit.

'Quhy ly ye thus? Ryse up, my sister deir,
Cum to your meit, this perrell is overpast.'
The uther answerit hir with hevie cheir,
'I may no eit, sa sair I am agast,
I had lever thir fourtie dayis fast,
With watter caill[15] and to gnaw benis or peis,
Than all your feist in this dreid and diseis.'

With fair tretie[16] yit scho gart[17] hir upryse,
And to the burde thay went and togidder sat;
And scantlie had thay drunkin anis or twyse,
Quhen in come Gib-Hunter, our jolie cat,
And bad God speid. The burges up with that,
And till the hole scho went as fyre of flint:
Bawdronis[18] the uther be the bak hes hint.[19]

Fra fute to fute he kest hir to and fra,
Quhylis up, quhylis doun, als cant[20] as ony kid;
Quhylis wald he lat hir run under the stra,
Quhylis wald he wink, and play with her bukheid.[21]
Thus to the selie mous greit pane he did,
Quhill at the last, throw fortune and gude hap,
Betuix ane burde[22] and the wall scho crap.

And up in haist behind ane parralling[23]
Scho clam so hie that Gilbert micht not get hir,
Syne be the cluke[24] thair craftelie can hing,
Till he wes gane, hir cheir wes all the better.
Syne doun scho lap quhen thair wes nane to let[25] hir,
And to the burges mous loud can scho cry:
'Fairweill, sister, thy feist heir I defy!'[26]

'Thy mangerie is myngit[27] all with cair,
Thy guse is gude, thy gansell[28] sour as gall;
The subcharge of thy service is bot sair,
So sall thow find efterwart na faill.[29]
I thank yone courtyne and yone perpall wall
Of my defence now fra ane crewell beist.
Almychtie God, keip me fra sic ane feist!

[1] Unleavened cakes. [2] fine bread. [3] jelly. [4] stole. [5] tickle. [6] till. [7] butler, keeper of the spence. [8] lacking good counsel. [9] leisure. [10] scare. [11] sore dreading. [12] pang. [13] such plight. [14] weep. [15] very thin broth. [16] entreaty. [17] caused. [18] Puss. [19] seized. [20] playful. [21] hide-and-seek. [22] board. Bann. *dressour*. [23] partition. [24] claw. [25] hinder. [26] renounce. [27] Thy feast is mingled. [28] sauce. [29] without doubt. Bann. *may fall*.

'Wer I into the kith[1] that I come fra,
For weill nor wo suld never cum agane.'
With that scho tuke hir leif and furth can ga,
Quhylis throw the corne, and quhylis throw the plane;
Quhen scho wes furth and fre, scho wes ful fane,
And merilie markit[2] unto the mure:
I can not tell how eftirwart[3] scho fure.[4]

Bot I hard say scho passit to hir den,
Als warme as woll, suppose[5] it wes not greit,
Full beinly[6] stuffit, baith but and ben,[7]
Of beinis and nuttis, peis, ry, and quheit;
Quhen ever scho list, scho had aneuch to eit,
In quyet and eis, withoutin ony dreid;
Bot to hir sisteris feist na mair scho yeid.[8]

MORALITAS

Friendis, ye may find, and ye will tak heid,
In to this fabill ane gude moralitie;
As fitchis myngit[9] ar with nobill seid,
Swa intermynglit is adversitie
And als troubill, and sum vexatioun,
With eirthlie joy, swa that na estait is fre
That ar not content of small possessioun,
And namelie[10] thay quhilk climmis up maist hie.

Blissit be sempill lyfe withoutin dreid,
Blissit be sober feist in quietie:
Quha hes aneuch, of na mair hes he neid,
Thocht it be lytill into quantitie.
Greit aboundance and blind prosperitie
Oftymes makis ane evill conclusioun;
The sweitest lyfe, thairfoir, in this cuntrie
Is sickernes,[11] with small possessioun.

Thy awin fyre, my friend, sa it be bot ane gleid,[12]
It warmis weill, and is worth gold to thee;
And Solomon sayis, gif that thow will reid,
'Under the hevin thair can not better be,
Than ay be blyith and leif in honestie.'
Quhairfoir I may conclude be this ressoun:
Of eirthly joy it beris maist degre,
Blyithnes in hart, with small possessioun.[13]

[1] native place. [2] hastened. [3] Bannatyne, Charteris and Harleian read *weill thairefter*. [4] fared. [5] although. [6] comfortably. [7] both outer and inner room. [8] went. [9] vetches mixed. [10] especially. [11] security. [12] one coal. [13] The Harleian text has an additional stanza after line 219.

ROBIN AND MAKIN

Robene sat on gud grene hill,
Kepand a flok of fe;[14]
Mirry Makyne said him till,[15]
'Robene, thow rew[16] on me;
I haif the luvit lowd and still,
Thir yeiris two or thre;
My dule in dern bot gif thow dill,[17]
Doutless but dreid I de.'[18]

Robene answerit, 'Be the rude,[19]
Nathing of lufe I knaw,
Bot keipis my scheip undir yone wid,[20]
Lo quhair thay raik on raw:[21]
Quhat hes marrit the in thy mude,
Makyne, to me thow schaw;
Or quhat is lufe, or to be lude?[22]
Fane wald I leir[23] that law.

'At luvis lair[24] gife thow will leir,
Tak thair ane a, b, c;
Be heynd,[25] courtass, and fair of feir,[26]
Wyse, hardy, and fre;
So that no denger do the deir,[27]
Quhat dule in dern thow dre;[28]
Preiss the[29] with pane at all poweir,
Be patient and previe.'

Robene answerit hir agane,
'I wait[30] nocht quhat is luve;
But I haif mervell in certane
Quhat makis the this wanrufe:[31]
The weddir is fair, and I am fane,
My scheip gois haill aboif;[32]
And[33] we wald play us in this plane,
Thay wald us bayth reproif.'

'Robene, tak tent[34] unto my taill,
And wirk all as I reid,
And thow sall haif my hairt all haill,
Eik and my maidenheid.
Sen God sendis bute for baill[35]
And for murnyng remeid,[36]
In dern with the, bot gif I daill,[37]
Dowtles I am bot deid.'

'Makyne, to morne this ilk a tyde,[38]
And ye will meet me heir, —

[14] sheep. [15] to. [16] have pity. [17] My secret grief unless thou assuage. [18] surely I die. [19] cross. [20] wood. [21] range in row. [22] loved. [23] learn. [24] lore. [25] gentle. [26] look. [27] daunt. [28] What woe in secret thou endure. [29] Exert thyself. [30] wot. [31] unhappiness. [32] all together above. [33] If. [34] heed. [35] remedy for harm. [36] compensation. [37] Unless I deal in secret with thee. [38] tomorrow this same time.

Peraventure my scheip may gang besyd,[1]
Quhill we haif liggit [2] full neir;
Bot mawgre haif I and I byd,[3]
Fra thay begin to steir;[4]
Quhat lyis on hairt I will nocht hyd;
Makyn, than mak gud cheir.'

'Robene, thow reivis me roif [5] and rest;
I luve bot the allane.'
'Makyne, adew, the sone gois west,
The day is neir hand gane.'
'Robene, in dule I am so drest,
That lufe wilbe my bane.'
'Ga lufe, Makyne, quhair evir thow list,
For lemman I lue nane.'

'Robene, I stand in sic a styll;[6]
I sicht,[7] and that full sair.'
'Makyne, I haif bene heir this quhyle;
At hame God gif I wair.'[8]
'My huny, Robene, talk ane quhyle,
Gif thow will do na mair.'
'Makyne, sum uthir man begyle,
For hamewart I will fair.'

Robene on his wayis went
Als licht as leif of tre;
Mawkin murnit in hir intent,[9]
And trowd him nevir to se.
Robene brayd atour the bent;[10]
Than Mawkyne cryit on hie,
'Now ma thow sing, for I am schent![11]
Quhat alis lufe at me?'[12]

Mawkyne went hame withowttin faill,
Full wery eftir cowth weip.
Than Robene in a ful fair daill
Assemblit all his scheip.
Be that sum pairte of Mawkynis aill
Outthrow his hairt cowd creip;
He fallowit hir fast thair till assaill,
And till hir tuke gude keip.

'Abyd, abyd, thow fair Makyne,
A word for ony thing;
For all my luve it sal be thyne,
Withowttin depairting.
All haill thy harte for till haif myne[13]
Is all my cuvating;
My scheip to morne quhill[14] houris nyne
Will neid of no keping.'

[1] stray. [2] while we lie (have lain). [3] confounded be I if I abide. [4] stir. [5] bereavest me of quiet. [6] state. [7] sigh. [8] God grant I were. [9] desire. [10] started across the moor. [11] lost. [12] What has love against me? [13] To have thy heart wholly mine. [14] till.

'Robene, thow hes hard soung and say,
In gestis and storeis auld,
"The man that will nocht quhen he may
Sall haif nocht quhen he wald."
I pray to Jesu every day
Mot eik[15] thair cairis cauld,
That first preissis[16] with the to play,
Be firth,[17] forrest, or fauld.'[18]

'Makyne, the nicht is soft and dry,
The weddir is warme and fair,
And the grene woid rycht neir us by
To walk attour all quhair;[19]
Thair ma na janglour[20] us espy,
That is to lufe contrair;
Thairin, Makyne, bath ye and I
Unsene we ma repair.'

'Robene, that warld is all away
And quyt brocht till ane end,
And nevir agane thairto perfay[21]
Sall it be as thow wend;[22]
For of my pane thow maid it play,
And all in vane I spend;
As thow hes done, sa sall I say,
Murne on, I think to mend.'

'Mawkyne, the howp of all my heill,[23]
My hairt on the is sett,
And evirmair to the be leill,
Quhill I may leif but lett;[24]
Nevir to faill, as utheris feill,
Quhat grace that evir I gett.'
'Robene, with the I will nocht deill;
Adew, for thus we mett.'

Malkyne went hame blyth annewche,
Attour the holttis hair;[25]
Robene murnit, and Makyne lewche;[26]
Scho sang, he sichit[27] sair;
And so left him, bayth wo and wrewche,[28]
In dolour and in cair,
Kepand his hird under a huche,[29]
Amangis the holtis hair.

THE GARMENT OF GOOD LADIES

WALD my gud lady lufe me best,
And wirk eftir my will,
I suld ane garmond gudliest
Gar mak hir body till.[30]

[15] increase. [16] try. [17] woodland. [18] fold. [19] To walk about everywhere. [20] gossip. [21] by my faith. [22] weened. [23] hope of all my health. [24] without ceasing. [25] Over the hoar hills. [26] laughed. [27] sighed. [28] woeful and wretched. [29] cliff. [30] Cause to be made for her body.

Off he [1] honour suld be hir hud,
Upoun hir heid to weir,
Garneist with governance so gud,
Na demyng suld hir deir.[2]

Hir sark [3] suld be hir body nixt,
Of chestetie so quhyt,
With schame and dreid togidder mixt,
The same suld be perfyt.

Hir kirtill suld be of clene constance,
Lasit with lesum lufe,[4]
The mailyeis of continuance [5]
For nevir to remufe.

Hir gown suld be of gudliness,
Weill ribband with renowne,
Purfillit [6] with plesour in ilk place,
Furrit with fyne fassoun.[7]

Hir belt suld be of benignitie,
About hir middill meit;

Hir mantill of humilitie,
To tholl [8] bayth wind and weit.

Hir hat suld be of fair having,[9]
And hir tepat [10] of trewth;
Hir patelet of gude pansing; [11]
Hir hals ribbane [12] of rewth.[13]

Hir slevis suld be of esperance,
To keip hir fra dispair;
Hir gluvis of gud govirnance,
To gyd hir fyngearis fair.

Hir schone [14] suld be of sickernes,[15]
In syne that scho nocht slyd;
Hir hoiss of honestie, I ges,
I suld for hir provyd.

Wald scho put on this garmond gay,
I durst sweir by my seill,[16]
That scho woir nevir grene nor gray
That set [17] hir half so weill.

[1] high. [2] No censure should injure her. [3] shift. [4] Laced with lawful love. [5] eyelet-holes of perseverance. [6] Adorned. [7] fashion.

[8] endure. [9] behavior. [10] tippet. [11] Her ruff of good thought. [12] neck-ribbon. [13] pity. [14] shoes. [15] sureness. [16] seal (?) happiness (?). [17] became.

WILLIAM DUNBAR

THE GOLDEN TARGE

Ryght as the stern[1] of day begouth to schyne,
Quhen gone to bed war Vesper and Lucyne,
I raise, and by a rosere[2] did me rest;
Up sprang the goldyn candill matutyne,
With clere depurit bemes cristallyne,
Glading the mery foulis in thair nest;
Or Phebus was in purpur kaip[3] revest
Up raise the lark, the hevyns menstrale fyne,
In May, in till a morow myrthfullest.

Full angellike thir birdis sang thair houris[4]
Within thair courtyns grene, in to thair bouris,
Apparalit quhyte and red, wyth blomes suete;
Anamalit was the felde wyth all colouris,
The perly droppis schake in silvir schouris,
Quhill all in balme did branch and levis flete;[5]
To part fra Phebus did Aurora grete,[6]
Hir cristall teris I saw hyng on the flouris,
Quhilk he for lufe all drank up with his hete.

For mirth of May, wyth skippis and wyth hoppis,
The birdis sang upon the tender croppis,[7]
With curiouse note, as Venus chapell clerkis:
The rosis yong, new spreding of thair knoppis,[8]
War powderit brycht with hevinly beriall[9] droppis,
Throu bemes rede, birnyng as ruby sperkis;
The skyes rang for schoutyng of the larkis,
The purpur hevyn ourscailit in silvir sloppis[10]
Ourgilt the treis, branchis, leivis and barkis.

[1] star. [2] rose-garden. [3] garment. [4] services. [5] float. [6] weep. [7] tops. [8] buds. [9] beryl. [10] spangled in silver doublet.

Doun throu the ryce[11] a ryvir ran wyth stremys,
So lustily agayn thai lykand lemys,[12]
That all the lake[13] as lamp did leme of licht,
Quhilk schadouit all about wyth twynkling glemis;
That bewis[14] bathit war in secund bemys
Throu the reflex of Phebus visage brycht;
On every syde the hegies raise on hicht,[15]
The bank was grene, the bruke was full of bremys,[16]
The stanneris[17] clere as stern in frosty nicht.

The cristall air, the sapher firmament,
The ruby skyes of the orient,
Kest beriall bemes on emerant bewis grene;
The rosy garth[18] depaynt and redolent,
With purpur, azure, gold, and goulis gent[19]
Arayed was, by dame Fflora the quene,
So nobily, that joy was for to sene;[20]
The roch[21] agayn the ryvir resplendent
As low[22] enlumynit all the leves schene.[23]

Quhat throu the mery foulys armony,
And throu the ryveris sounn that ran me by,
On Fflorais mantill I slepit as I lay,
Quhare sone in to my dremes fantasy
I saw approach agayn the orient sky,
A saill, als quhite as blossum upon spray,
Wyth merse[24] of gold, brycht as the stern of day;
Quhilk tendit to the land full lustily,
As falcounn swift desyrouse of hir pray.

And hard on burd[25] unto the blomyt medis,
Amang the grene rispis[26] and the redis,
Arrivit sche; quhar fro anonn thare landis
Ane hundreth ladyes, lusty in to wedis,

[11] thickets. [12] in those pleasant gleams. [13] water. [14] boughs. [15] on high. [16] the fish bream. [17] gravel on the bottom. [18] garden. [19] fine red. [20] see. [21] rock. [22] flame. [23] bright. [24] round-top on a mast. [25] aground. [26] grasses.

Als fresch as flouris that in May up spredis,
In kirtillis grene, withoutyn kell[1] or bandis;[2]
Thair brycht hairis hang gletering on the strandis
In tressis clere, wyppit[3] wyth goldyn thredis,
With pappis[4] quhite, and middillis small as wandis.

Discrive I wald, bot quho coud wele endyte
How all the feldis wyth thai lilies quhite
Depaynt war brycht, quhilk to the hevin did glete:[5]
Noucht thou, [H]omer, als fair as thou coud wryte,
For all thine ornate stilis so perfyte;
Nor yit thou, Tullius, quhois lippis suete
Off rethorike did in to termis flete:[6]
Your aureate tongis both bene all to lyte,[7]
For to compile that paradise complete.

Thare saw I Nature, and [als dame] Venus quene,
The fresch Aurora, and lady Flora schene,
Iuno, Appollo[8] and Proserpyna,
Dyane the goddesse chaste of woddis grene,
My lady Cleo, that help of Makaris[9] bene,[10]
Thetes, Pallas, and prudent Minerva,
Fair feynit[11] Fortune, and lemand[12] Lucina,
Thir mychti quenis in crounis mycht be sene,
Wyth bemys blith, bricht as Lucifera.

There saw I May, of myrthfull monethis quene,
Betwix Aprile and June, her sister[13] schene,
Within the gardying walking up and doun,
Quham of the foulis gladdith al bedene;[14]
Scho was full tender in hir yeris grene.
Thare saw I Nature present hir a gounn
Rich to behald, and nobil of renounn,
Off eviry hew that under the hevin that bene
Depaynt, and broud[15] be gude proporcioun.

Full lustily thir ladyes all in fere[16]
Enterit within this park of most plesere,
Quhare that I lay our helit[17] wyth levis ronk;
The mery foulis, blisfullest of chere,
Salust[18] Nature, me thocht, on thair manere,
And eviry blome on branch, and eke on bonk,
Opnyt and spred thair balmy levis donk,
Full low enclynyng to thair Quene so clere,
Quham of thair nobill norising thay thonk.

Syne[19] to dame Flora, on the samyn wyse,
Thay saluse, and thay thank a thousand syse;[20]
And to dame Venus, lufis mychti quene,
Thay sang ballattis in lufe, as was the gyse,[21]
With amourouse notis lusty to devise,
As thay that had lufe in thair hertis grene;
Thair hony throtis, opnyt fro the splene,[22]
With werblis suete did perse the hevinly skyes,
Quhill loud resownyt the firmament serene.

Ane othir court thare saw I consequent,
Cupide the king, wyth bow in handy bent,
And dredefull arowis grundyn scharp and square;
Thare saw I Mars, the god armypotent,
Aufull and sterne, strong and corpolent;
Thare saw I crabbit Saturn ald and haire,[23]
His luke was lyke for to perturb the aire;
Thare was Marcurius, wise and eloquent,
Of rhethorike that fand the flouris faire;

Thare was the god of gardingis, Priapus;
Thare was the god of wildernes, Phanus;
And Ianus, god of entree delytable;
Thare was the god of fludis, Neptunus;
Thare was the god of wyndis, Eolus,
With variand luke, rycht lyke a lord unstable;
Thare was Bacus, the gladder of the table;
Thare was Pluto, the elrich[24] incubus,
In cloke of grene, his court usit no sable.

1 caul. 2 fillets. 3 bound. 4 breasts. 5 shine. 6 float in rhetorical terms. 7 too inadequate. 8 Probably for Latona. 9 poets. 10 is. 11 tricky. 12 gleaming. 13 Plural. 14 In whom the birds rejoice all suddenly. 15 embroidered.

16 in company. 17 covered. 18 saluted. 19 afterwards. 20 times. 21 guise, fashion. 22 from the heart, i.e. joyously. 23 hoar. 24 elvish.

And eviry one of thir, in grene arayit,
On harp or lute full merily thai playit,
Aud sang ballettis with michty notis clere:
Ladyes to dance full sobirly assayit,
Endlang[1] the lusty ryvir so thai mayit;
Thair observance rycht hevynly was to here;
Than crap I throu the levis, and drew nere,
Quhare that I was richt sudaynly affrayit,
All throu a luke, quhilk I have boucht full dere.

And schortly for to speke, be lufis quene
I was aspyit, scho bad hir archearis kene
Go me arrest; and thay no time delayit;
Than ladyes fair lete fall thair mantillis greu[e],
With bowis big, in tressit hairis schene,
All sudaynly thay had a felde arayit;
And yit rycht gretly was I noucht affrayit,
The party was so plesand for to sene,
A wonder lusty bikkir[2] me assayit.

And first of all, with bow in hand ybent,
Come dame Beautee, rycht as scho wald me schent;[3]
Syne folowit all hir dameselis yfere,[4]
With mony diverse aufull instrument,
Vnto the pres; Fair Having wyth hir went,
Fyne Portrature, Plesance, and lusty Chere.
Than come Resoun, with schelde of gold so clere,
In plate and maille, as Mars armypotent,
Defendit me that nobil chevallere.

Syne tender Youth come wyth hir virgyns ying,
Grene Innocence, and schamefull Abaising,
And quaking Drede, wyth humble Obedience;
The Goldyn Targe harmyt thay nothing;
Curage in thame was noucht begonne to spring;
Full sore thay dred to done a violence:
Suete Womanhede I saw cum in presence,
Of artilye[5] a warld sche did in bring,
Servit wyth ladyes full of reverence.

[1] along. [2] A wondrous pleasant strife. [3] harm. [4] together. [5] artillery.

Scho led with hir Nurture and Lawlynes,
Contenence,[6] Pacience, Gude Fame, and Stedfastnes,
Discretioun, Gentrise,[7] and Considerance,
Leuefell[8] Company, and Honest Besynes,
Benigne Luke, Mylde Chere, and Sobirnes:
All thir bure ganyeis[9] to do me grevance;
But Resoun bure the Targe wyth sik constance,
Thair scharp assayes mycht do no dures[10]
To me, for all thair awfull ordynance.

Unto the pres persewit Hie Degre,
Hir folowit ay Estate and Dignitee,
Comparisoun, Honour, and Noble Array,
Will, Wantonnes, Renoun, and Libertee,
Richesse, Fredomm, and eke Nobilitee:
Wit ye thay did thair baner hye display;
A cloud of arowis as hayle schour lousit thay,
And schot, quhill[11] wastit was thair artilye,
Syne went abak reboutit[12] of thair pray.

Quhen Venus had persavit this rebute,
Dissymilance scho bad go mak persute,
At all powere[13] to perse the Goldyn Targe;
And scho that was of doubilnes the rute
Askit hir choise of archeris in refute.[14]
Venus the best bad hir to wale[15] at large;
Scho tuke Presence plicht[16] anker of the barge,
And Fair Callyng that wele a flayn[17] coud schute,
And Cherising for to complete hir charge.

Dame Hamelynes[18] scho tuke in company,
That hardy was, and hende[19] in archery,
And brocht dame Beautee to the felde agayn;
With all the choise of Venus chevalry
Thay come, and bikkerit[20] unabaisitly.
The schour of arowis rappit on as rayn;
Perilouse Presence, that mony syre has slayne,
The batail broucht on bordour[21] hard us by,
The salt[22] was all the sarar suth to sayn.

[6] Restraint. [7] Gentleness. [8] Lawful. [9] these bore arrows. [10] harm. [11] till. [12] balked. [13] By all means. [14] as a (last) resort (?) [15] choose. [16] sheet-anchor, chief anchor. [17] arrow. [18] Homeliness. [19] skilled. [20] fought. [21] on the beach. [22] assault.

Thik was the schote of grundyn dartis kene;
Bot Resoun with the Scheld of Gold so schene
Warly[1] defendit, quho so evir assayit;
The aufull stoure[2] he manly did sustene,
Quhill[3] Presence kest a pulder[4] in his ene,
And than as a drunkyn man he all forvayit :[5]
Quhen he was blynd the fule wyth hym thay playit,
And banyst hym amang the bewis grene;
That sory sicht me sudaynly affrayit.

Than was I woundit to the deth wele nere,
And yoldyn as a wofull prisonere
To lady Beautee in a moment space;
Me thoucht scho semyt lustiar of chere
Efter that Resoun tynt[6] had his eyne clere,
Than of before, and lufliare of face :
Quhy was thou blyndit, Resoun? quhi, allace!
And gert[7] ane hell my paradise appere,
And mercy seme, quhare that I fand no grace.

Dissymulance was besy me to sile,[8]
And Fair Calling did oft upoun me smyle,
And Cherising me fed wyth wordis fair;
New Acquyntance embracit me a quhile,
And favouryt me, quhill men mycht ga ane myle,
Syne tuk hir leve, I saw hir nevir mare:
Than saw I Dangere toward me repair,
I coud eschew hir presence be no wyle,
On syde scho lukit wyth ane fremyt fare.[9]

And at the last departing coud hir dresse,[10]
And me delyverit unto Hevynesse
For to remayne, and scho in cure me tuke.
Be this the Lord of Wyndis, wyth wodenes,[11]
God Eolus, his bugill blew I gesse;
That with the blast the levis all to-schuke,
And sudaynly, in the space of a luke,
All was hyne[12] went, thare was bot wildernes,
Thare was no more bot birdis, bank, and bruke.

In twynkling of ane eye to schip thai went,
And swyth[13] up saile unto the top thai stent,[14]
And with swift course atour[15] the flude thay frak;[16]
Thay fyrit gunnis wyth powder violent,
Till that the reke[17] raise to the firmament,
The rockis all resownyt wyth the rak,[18]
For reird[19] it semyt that the raynbow brak;
Wyth spreit affrayde apon my fete I sprent[20]
Amang the clewis,[21] so carefull was the crak.

And as I did awake of my suev[n]ing,[22]
The joyfull birdis merily did syng
For myrth of Phebus tendir bemes schene;
Suete war the vapouris, soft the morowing,
Halesum the vale, depaynt wyth flouris ying;
The air attemperit, sobir, and amene;[23]
In quhite and rede was all the felde besene,[24]
Throu Naturis nobil fresche anamalyng,
In mirthfull May, of eviry moneth quene.

O reverend Chaucere, rose of rethoris all,
As in oure tong ane flour imperiall,
That raise in Britane evir, quho redis rycht,
Thou beris of makaris the tryumph riall;
Thy fresch anamalit termes celicall[25]
This mater coud illumynit have full brycht.
Was thou noucht of oure Inglisch all the lycht,
Surmounting eviry tong terrestriall,
Alls fer as Mayes morow dois mydnycht?

O morall Gower, and Ludgate laureate,
Your sugurit lippis and toungis aureate,
Bene to oure eris cause of grete delyte;
Your angel mouthis most mellifluate
Our rude langage has clere illumynate,
And faire our-gilt oure speche, that imperfyte
Stude, or your goldyn pennis schupe[26] to wryte;
This Ile before was bare, and desolate
Off rethorike, or lusty fresch endyte.

[1] Warily. [2] attack. [3] Till. [4] powder. [5] went astray. [6] lost. [7] caused. [8] deceive. [9] strange look. [10] prepared herself. [11] madness. [12] hence.
[13] swiftly. [14] hoisted. [15] over. [16] hastened. [17] reek, smoke. [18] noise. [19] uproar. [20] sprang. [21] gorges. [22] dreaming. [23] agreeable. [24] dressed. [25] celestial. [26] shaped, prepared.

Thou lytill Quair,[1] be evir obedient,
Humble, subject, and symple of entent,
Before the face of eviry connyng wicht;
I knaw quhat thou of rethorike hes spent;
Off all hir lusty rosis redolent
Is none in to thy gerland sett on hicht;
Eschame thar of, and draw the out of sicht,
Rude is thy wede, disteynit, bare, and rent,
Wele aucht thou be afiret[2] of the licht.

THE THISTLE AND THE ROSE

Quhen Merche wes with variand windis past
And Appryll had, with hir silver schouris,
Tane leif at Nature with ane orient blast;
And lusty May, that muddir is of flouris,
Had maid the birdis to begyn thair houris[3]
Amang the tendir odouris reid and quhyt,
Quhois armony to heir it wes delyt;

In bed at morrow, sleiping as I lay,
Me thocht Aurora, with hir cristall ene,
In at the window lukit by the day,
And halsit[4] me, with visage paill and grene;
On quhois hand a lark sang fro the splene,[5]
'Awalk, luvaris, out of your slomering,
Se how the lusty morrow dois up spring.'

Me thocht fresche May befoir my bed upstude,
In weid depaynt of mony diverss hew,
Sobir, benyng, and full of mansuetude,[6]
In brycht atteir of flouris forgit new,
Hevinly of color, quhyt, reid, broun and blew,
Balmit in dew, and gilt with Phebus bemys,
Quhill all the houss illumynit of hir lemys.[7]

'Slugird,' scho said, 'awalk[8] annone for schame,
And in my honour sum thing thou go wryt;
The lork hes done the mirry day proclame,
To raiss up luvaris with confort and delyt,
Yit nocht incressis thy curage to indyt,
Quhois hairt sum tyme hes glaid and blisfull bene,
Sangis to mak undir the levis grene.'

[1] book. [2] afraid. [3] prayers. [4] greeted. [5] from the heart, merrily. [6] benignity. [7] gleams. [8] awake.

'Quhairto,' quod I, 'sall I upryss at morrow,
For in this May few birdis herd I sing?
Thai haif moir cause to weip and plane thair sorrow,
Thy air it is nocht holsum nor benyng;[9]
Lord Eolus dois in thy sessone ring;[10]
So busteous[11] ar the blastis of his horne,
Amang thy bewis[12] to walk I haif forborne.'

With that this lady sobirly did smyll,
And said, 'Upryss, and do thy observance;
Thow did promyt, in Mayis lusty quhyle,
For to discryve[13] the Ross of most plesance.
Go se the birdis how thay sing and dance,
Illumynit our[14] with orient skyis brycht,
Annamyllit richely with new asur lycht.'

Quhen this wes said, depairtit scho, this quene,
And enterit in a lusty gairding gent;
And than, methocht, full hestely besene,[15]
In serk and mantill [efter hir] I went
Into this garth,[16] most dulce[17] and redolent
Off herb and flour, and tendir plantis sueit,
And grene levis doing of dew doun fleit.[18]

The purpour sone, with tendir bemys reid,
In orient bricht as angell did appeir,
Throw goldin skyis putting up his heid,
Quhois gilt tressis schone so wondir cleir,
That all the world tuke confort, fer and neir,
To luke upone his fresche and blisfull face,
Doing all sable fro the hevynnis chace.[19]

And as the blisfull sonne of cherarchy[20]
The fowlis song throw confort of the licht;
The birdis did with oppin vocis cry,
'O, luvaris fo, away thou dully nycht,
And welcum day that confortis every wicht;
Haill May, haill Flora, haill Aurora schene,
Haill princes Natur, haill Venus luvis quene.'

Dame Nature gaif ane inhibitioun thair
To ferss Neptunus, and Eolus the bawld,

[9] benign. [10] reign. [11] rude. [12] boughs. [13] describe. [14] over. [15] hastily clad. [16] yard. [17] sweet. [18] leaves swimming with dew. [19] doing chase = chasing. [20] sound of the hierarchy (of angels).

Nocht to perturb the wattir nor the air,
And that no schouris, nor blastis cawld,
Effray suld flouris nor fowlis on the fold;[1]
Scho bad eik Juno, goddis of the sky,
That scho the hevin suld keip amene[2] and dry.

Scho ordand eik that every bird and beist
Befoir hir hienes suld annone compeir,[3]
And every flour of vertew, most and leist,
And every herb be feild fer and neir,
As thay had wont in May, fro yeir to yeir,
To hir thair makar to mak obediens,
Full law inclynnand with all dew reverens.

With that annone scho send the swyft Ro
To bring in beistis of all conditioun;
The restles Suallow commandit scho also
To feche all fowll of small and greit renown;
And to gar[4] flouris compeir[5] of all fassoun
Full craftely conjurit scho the Yarrow,
Quhilk did furth swirk[6] als swift as ony arrow.

All present wer in twynkling of ane e,
Baith beist, and bird, and flour, befoir the quene,
And first the Lyone, gretast of degre,
Was callit thair, and he, most fair to sene,
With a full hardy contenance and kene,
Befoir Dame Natur come, and did inclyne,
With visage bawld, and curage leonyne.

This awfull beist full terrible wes of cheir,
Persing of luke, and stout of countenance,
Rycht strong of corpis, of fassoun fair, but feir,[7]
Lusty of schaip, lycht of deliverance,[8]
Reid of his cullour, as is the ruby glance;
On feild of gold he stude full mychtely,
With flour delycis sirculit lustely.[9]

This lady liftit up his cluvis[10] cleir,
And leit him listly[11] lene upon hir kne,
And crownit him with dyademe full deir,
Off radyous stonis, most ryall for to se;
Saying, 'The King of Beistis mak I the,
And the cheif protector in woddis and schawis;[12]
Onto thi leigis go furth, and keip the lawis.

'Exerce justice with mercy and conscience,
And lat no small beist suffir skaith[13] na skornis
Of greit beistis that bene of moir piscence;[14]
Do law elyk[15] to aipis and unicornis,
And lat no bowgle,[16] with his busteous hornis,
The meik pluch ox[17] oppress, for all his pryd,
Bot in the yok go peciable him besyd.'

Quhen this was said, with noyis and soun of joy,
All kynd of beistis in to thair degre,
At onis cryit lawd, 'Vive le Roy!'
And till his feit fell with humilite,
And all thay maid him homege and fewte;[18]
And he did thame ressaif with princely laitis,[19]
Quhois noble yre is proceir prostratis.[20]

Syne crownit scho the Egle King of Fowlis,
And as steill dertis scherpit scho his pennis,[21]
And bawd him be als just to awppis[22] and owlis,
As unto pacokkis, papingais,[23] or crennis,[24]
And mak a law for wycht[25] fowlis and for wrennis;
And lat no fowll of ravyne do efferay,[26]
Nor devoir birdis bot his awin pray.

Than callit scho all flouris that grew on feild,
Discirnyng all thair fassionis and effeiris,[27]
Upone the awfull Thrissill scho beheld,
And saw him kepit with a busche of speiris;
Concedring him so able for the weiris,
A radius croun of rubeis scho him gaif,
And said, 'In feild go furth, and fend the laif;[28]

[1] earth. [2] pleasant. [3] appear. [4] make. [5] appear. [6] dart. [7] without peer. [8] motion. [9] This is the blazoning of the royal arms of Scotland. [10] claws. [11] pleasantly.
[12] groves. [13] harm. [14] puissance. [15] alike. [16] wild ox. [17] plough ox. [18] fealty. [19] gestures. [20] Perhaps "to spare the prostrate," *proceir* for *proteir*, from *protéger*. (Gregor's note.) [21] quills. [22] curlews. [23] parrots. [24] cranes. [25] powerful. [26] affright. [27] qualities. [28] defend the rest.

'And, sen thow art a king, thou be discreit;
Herb without vertew thou hald nocht of sic pryce
As herb of vertew and of odor sueit;
And lat no nettill vyle, and full of vyce,
Hir fallow[1] to the gudly flour delyce;
Nor latt no wyld weid, full of churlicheness,
Compair hir till the lilleis nobilness.

'Nor hald non udir flour in sic denty[2]
As the fresche Ross, of cullour reid and quhyt;[3]
For gife thow dois, hurt is thyne honesty,
Conciddering that no flour is so perfyt,
So full of vertew, plesans and delyt,
So full of blisfull angeilik bewty,
Imperiall birth, honour and dignite.'

Than to the Ross scho turnyt hir visage,
And said, 'O lusty dochtir most benyng,
Aboif the lilly, illustare of lynnage,[4]
Fro the stok ryell rysing fresche and ying,
But ony spot or macull doing spring;[5]
Cum, blowme of joy, with jemis to be cround,
For our the laif[6] thy bewty is renownd.'

A coistly croun, with clarefeid stonis brycht,
This cumly quene did on hir heid incloiss,
Quhill all the land illumynit of the licht;
Quhairfoir me thocht all flouris did reiois,
Crying attonis,[7] 'Haill, be thou richest Ross!
Haill, hairbis empryce, haill, freschest quene of flouris!
To the be glory and honour at all houris!'

Thane all the birdis song with voce on hicht,
Quhois mirthfull soun wes mervelus to heir;
The mavyss song, 'Haill, Roiss, most riche and richt,
That dois up flureiss undir Phebus speir;
Haill, plant of yowth, haill, princes dochtir deir,
Haill, blosome breking out of the blud royall,
Quhois pretius vertew is imperiall.'

The merle scho sang, 'Haill, Roiss of most delyt,
Haill, of all flouris quene and soverane;'
The lark scho song, 'Haill, Roiss, both reid and quhyt,
Most plesand flour, of michty cullouris twane;'
The nychtingaill song, 'Haill, Naturis suffragene,
In bewty, nurtour and every nobilness,
In riche array, renown and gentilness.'

The commoun voce upraiss of birdis small,
Apone this wyss, 'O blissit be the hour
That thow wes chosin to be our principall;
Welcome to be our princes of honour,
Our perle, our plesans and our paramour,
Our peax,[8] our play, our plane felicite,
Chryst the conserf frome all adversite.'

Then all the birdis song with sic a schout,
That I annone awoilk quhair that I lay,
And with a braid[9] I turnyt me about
To se this court; bot all wer went away:
Than up I lenyt, halflingis in affrey,[10]
And thuss I wret, as ye haif hard to forrow,[11]
Off lusty May upone the nynt morrow.

LAMENT FOR THE MAKERS[12]

QUHEN HE WES SEIK

I THAT in heill[13] wes and glaidnes,
Am trublit now with gret seiknes,
And feblit with infirmitie;
Timor Mortis conturbat me.[14]

Our plesance heir is all vane glory,
This fals warld is bot transitory,
The fleshche is brukle,[15] the Fend is sle;[16]
Timor Mortis conturbat me.

The stait of man dois change and vary,
Now sound, now seik, now blyth, now sary,
Now dansand mirry, now like to dee;
Timor Mortis conturbat me.

No stait in erd[17] heir standis sickir[18]
As with the wynd wavis the wickir,[19]
[So] wavis this warldis vanite;
Timor Mortis conturbat me.

[1] fellow, join herself. [2] estimation.
[3] An allusion to the union of the houses of York and Lancaster by the marriage of Henry VII and Elizabeth, daughter of Edward IV.
[4] Hinting at the efforts made to marry James IV to a French princess. [5] Springing without stain.
[6] over the rest. [7] at once.
[8] peace. [9] start. [10] half in affright. [11] before.
[12] Poets. [13] health. [14] The fear of death troubles me.
[15] frail. [16] sly. [17] earth. [18] secure. [19] wicker, twig.

Onto the ded[1] gois all estatis,
Princis, prelotis, and potestatis,
Baith riche and pur of all degre;
Timor Mortis conturbat me.

He takis the knychtis in to feild,
Anarmit under helme and scheild;
Victour he is at all melle;[2]
Timor Mimor conturbat me.

That strang unmercifull tyrand
Tak[is] on the moderis breist sowkand
The bab, full of benignite;
Timor Mortis conturbat me.

He takis the campion in the stour,[3]
The capitane closit in the tour,
The lady in bour full of bewte;
Timor Mortis conturbat me.

He spairis no lord for his piscence,[4]
Na clerk for his intelligence;
His awfull strak may no man fle;
Timor Mortis conturbat me.

Art, magicianis, and astrologgis,
Rethoris, logicians, and theologgis,
Thame helpis no conclusionis sle;
Timor Mortis conturbat me.

In medicyne the most practicianis,
Lechis, surrigianis, and phisicianis,
Thame self fra ded may not supple;[5]
Timor Mortis conturbat me.

I see that makaris amang the laif[6]
Playis heir ther pageant, syne gois to graif;[7]
Sparit is nocht ther facultе;[8]
Timor Mortis conturbat me.

He hes done petuously devour,
The noble Chaucer, of makaris flouir,
The Monk of Bery,[9] and Gower, all thre;
Timor Mortis conturbat me.

The gude Syr Hew of Eglintoun,
Ettrik,[10] Heryot, et Wyntoun,[11]
He hes tane out of this cuntre;
Timor Mortis conturbat me.

1 death. 2 contest. 3 the champion in the battle.
4 puissance. 5 defend. 6 rest. 7 grave.
8 profession. 9 i.e., Lydgate.
10 So Bannatyne MS.; Maitland MS. *et eik.*
11 For all these poets see the notes to the Scottish Text Soc. edition.

That scorpioun fell hes done infek[12]
Maister Johne Clerk, and James Afflek,
Fra balat making and trigide;
Timor Mortis conturbat me.

Holland and Barbour he has berevit;
Allace! that he nought with us levit
Schir Mungo Lokert of the Le;
Timor Mortis conturbat me.

Clerk of Tranent eik he has tane,
That maid the anteris[13] of Gawane;
Schir Gilbert Hay endit has he;
Timor Mortis conturbat me.

He has Blind Hary, and Sandy Traill
Slaine with his schour of mortall haill,
Quhilk Patrik Johnestoun myght nought fle;
Timor Mortis conturbat me.

He hes reft Merseir his endite,[14]
That did in luf so lifly write,
So schort, so quyk, of sentence hie;
Timor Mortis conturbat me.

He hes tane Roull of Aberdene,
And gentill Roull of Corstorphin[e];
Two bettir fallowis did no man se;
Timor Mortis conturbat me.

In Dunfermelyne he has done roune[15]
With Maister Robert Henrisoun;
Schir Johne the Ros enbrast[16] hes he;
Timor Mortis conturbat me.

And he has now tane, last of aw,[17]
Gud gentill Stobo and Quintyne Schaw,
Of quham all wichtis hes pete;
Timor Mortis conturbat me.

Gud Maister Walter Kennedy
In poynt of dede lyis veraly,
Gret reuth it wer that so suld be;
Timor Mortis conturbat me.

Sen he has all my brether tane,
He will naught lat me lif alane,
On forse I man[18] his nyxt pray be;
Timor Mortis conturbat me.

13 has stricken and withheld. 14 writing. 15 whispered. 16 embraced. 17 all. 18 must.

Sen for the deid remeid is non,
Best is that we for dede dispone,[1]
Eftir our deid that lif may we;
Timor Mortis conturbat me.

THE DANCE OF THE SEVEN DEADLY SINS

Off Februar the fyiftene nycht,
Full lang befoir the dayis lycht,
I lay in till a trance;
And then I saw baith Hevin and Hell:
Me thocht, amangis the feyndis fell,
Mahoun[2] gart cry ane dance
Off schrewis[3] that wer nevir schrevin,
Aganiss the feist of Fasternis evin,[4]
To mak thair observance;
He bad gallandis ga graith a gyiss,[5]
And kast up gamountis[6] in the skyiss,
That last came out of France.

'Lat se,' quod he, 'now quha begynnis?'
With that the fowll Sevin Deidly Synnis
Begowth to leip at anis.
And first of all in dance wes Pryd,
With hair wyld[7] bak and bonet on syd,
Lyk to mak vaistie wanis;[8]
And round abowt him, as a quheill,
Hang all in rumpillis to the heill
His kethat[9] for the nanis:[10]
Mony prowd trumpour[11] with him trippit
Throw skaldand fyre, ay as thay skippit
Thay gyrnd[12] with hiddouss granis.[13]

Heilie harlottis on hawtane wyiss[14]
Come in with mony sindrie gyiss,[15]
Bot yit luche[16] nevir Mahoun;
Quhill[17] preistis come in with bair schevin nekkis,
Than all the feyndis lewche, and maid gekkis,[18]
Blak Belly and Bawsy Brown.[19]

Than Yre come in with sturt[20] and stryfe;
His hand wes ay upoun his knyfe,
He brandeist lyk a beir:[21]
Bostaris, braggaris, and barganeris,[22]
Eftir him passit in to pairis,
All bodin in feir of weir;[23]

In jakkis[24] and stryppis[25] and bonettis of steill,
Thair leggis wer chenyeit[26] to the heill,
Ffrawart wes thair affeir:[27]
Sum upoun udir with brandis beft,[28]
Sum jaggit[29] uthiris to the heft,
With knyvis that scherp cowd scheir.

Nixt in the dance followit Invy,
Fild full of feid[30] and fellony,
Hid malyce and dispyte;
Ffor pryvie hatrent[31] that tratour trymlit.
Him followit mony freik[32] dissymlit,
With fenyeit wirdis[33] quhyte;

And flattereris in to menis facis,
And bakbyttaris in secreit placis
To ley[34] that had delyte;
And rownaris of fals lesingis;[35]
Allace! that courtis of noble kingis
Of thame can nevir be quyte.

Nixt him in dans come Cuvatyce,
Rute of all evill and grund of vyce,
That nevir cowd be content;
Catyvis, wrechis, and okkeraris,[36]
Hud-pykis, hurdaris, and gadderaris[37]
All with that warlo[38] went:

Out of thair throttis thay schot on udder[39]
Hett moltin gold, me thocht a fudder,[40]
As fyreflawcht[41] maist fervent;
Ay as thay tomit[42] thame of schot,
Ffeyndis fild thame new up to the thrott
With gold of allkin prent.[43]

Syne Sweirnes,[44] at the secound bidding,
Come lyk a sow out of a midding,
Full slepy wes his grunyie:[45]
Mony sweir bumbard belly huddroun,[46]
Mony slute daw[47] and slepy duddroun.[48]
Him serwit ay with sounyie.[49]

He drew thame furth in till a chenyie,[50]
And Belliall, with a brydill renyie,[51]
Evir lascht thame on the lunyie:[52]

1 dispose. 2 Mahomet, i.e., the Devil. 3 rascals. 4 the eve of Lent. 5 gallants prepare a masquerade. 6 gambols. 7 combed. 8 desolate dwellings. 9 cassock. 10 nonce. 11 deceiver. 12 snarled. 13 groans. 14 Proud rascals in haughty fashion. 15 costume. 16 laughed. 17 Till. 18 mocks. 19 Two popular devils. 20 trouble. 21 swaggered like a bear. 22 quarrellers. 23 arrayed in the likeness of war.

24 corselets. 25 strips. But Bannatyne MS. may be read *scryppis*, bags. Neither is satisfactory. 26 covered with chain-mail. 27 Wild was their behavior. 28 beat. 29 stabbed. 30 feud. 31 hatred. 32 person. 33 words. 34 lie. 35 whisperers of false lies. 36 usurers. 37 Misers, hoarders, and gatherers. 38 wizard. 39 others. 40 great quantity (lit. 128 lbs.). 41 wildfire. 42 emptied. 43 all kinds of coinage. 44 Sloth. 45 visage. 46 lazy, tun-bellied sloven (Chalmers). 47 idle rogue. 48 drab. 49 care. 50 chain. 51 rein. 52 loin.

In dance thay war so slaw of feit,
Thay gaif thame in the fyre a heit,
And maid thame quicker of counyie.[1]

Than Lichery, that lathly corss,
Berand [2] lyk a bagit horss,[3]
And Ydilness did him leid;
Thair wes with him ane ugly sort,[4]
Full mony stynkand fowll tramort,[5]
That had in syn bene deid.

. . . . . .

Than the fowll monstir Glutteny,
Off wame [6] unsasiable and gredy,
To dance he did him dress.
Him followit mony fowll drunckart,
With can and collep,[7] cop and quart,
In surffett and excess;

Full mony a waistless wallydrag,[8]
With wamiss unweildable,[9] did furth wag,
In creische [10] that did incress;
'Drynk!' ay thay cryit, with mony a gaip,[11]
The feyndis gaif thame hait leid to laip,[12]
Thair leveray [13] wes na less.

Na menstrallis playit to thame but dowt;
Ffor glemen thair wer haldin owt,
Be day, and eik by nycht,
Except a menstrall that slew a man,
Swa till his heretage he wan,
And entirt be brief of richt.

Than cryd Mahoun for a Heleand padyane;[14]
Syne ran a feynd to feche Makfadyane,
Ffar northwart in a nuke;[15]
Be he the correnoch [16] had done schout,
Erschemen [17] so gadderit him abowt,
In Hell grit rowme thay tuke.

Thae tarmegantis,[18] with tag and tatter,
Ffull lowde in Ersche [19] begowth to clatter,
And rowp lyk revin and ruke;[20]
The Devill sa devit [21] wes with thair yell,
That in the depest pot of Hell
He smorit [22] thame with smuke.

1 apprehension. 2 snorting, roaring. 3 stallion (?) Maitland reads *bewkit*, balky. 4 lot. 5 corpse. 6 belly. 7 mug. 8 sloven. 9 huge bellies. 10 grease. 11 gape. 12 hot lead to lap. 13 livery, reward. 14 Highland pageant. 15 nook, corner. 16 coronach, dirge. 17 Ersemen, Gaels from the Highlands. 18 termagants, fiends. 19 Gaelic. 20 croak like raven and rook. 21 deafened. 22 smothered.

THE PETITION OF THE GRAY HORSE, OLD DUNBAR

Now lufferis cummis with largess lowd,[23]
Quhy sould not palfrayis thane be prowd,
Quhen gillettis wil be schomd and schroud,[24]
That ridden ar baith with lord and lawd?[25]
Schir, lett it nevir in toun be tald
That I sould be ane Yuillis yald![26]

Quhen I was young and into ply,[27]
And wald cast gammaldis [28] to the sky,
I had beine bocht in realmes by,[29]
Had I consentit to be sauld.
Schir, lett it nevir in toun be tald
That I sould be ane Yuillis yald!

With gentill horss quhen I wald knyp,[30]
Thane is thair laid on me ane quhip,
To colleveris [31] than man I skip,
That scabbit ar, hes cruik [32] and cald.
Schir, lett it nevir in toun be tald
That I sould be ane Yuillis yald!

Thocht in the stall I be nocht clappit,
As cursouris that in silk beine trappit,
With ane new houss [33] I wald be happit,
Aganis this Crysthinmes for the cald.
Schir, lett it nevir in town be tald
That I sould be ane Yuillis yald!

Suppois I war ane ald yaid aver,[34]
Schott furth our clewch [35] to pull the clever,[36]
And had the strenthis of all Strenever,
I wald at Youll be housit and stald.
Schir, latt it nevir in toun be tald,
That I suld be ane Yuillis yald!

I am ane auld horss, as ye knaw,
That evir in duill dois drug [37] and draw;
Great court horss puttis me fra the staw,[38]
To fang the fog be firthe and fald.[39]
Schir, latt it nevir in toun be tald
That I sould be ane Yuillis yald!

I haif run lang furth in the feild,
On pastouris that ar plane and peild;[40]
I mycht be now tein [41] in for eild,[42]

23 lovers come with plenteous generosity.
24 fillies will be protected and dressed.
25 lewd, i. e., common.
26 Yule jade, i. e., having nothing new to wear for Christmas, hence unfortunate, disgraced.
27 in condition. 28 gambols. 29 near. 30 eat grass.
31 coal-heavers, or better coal-aivers, colliers' horses.
32 are lame. 33 housing. 34 spent jade. 35 Thrust out into the rough ravine. 36 clover. 37 drag.
38 stall. 39 To crop the moss by field and fold.
40 stripped. 41 taken. 42 age.

My beikis ar spruning he[1] and bauld.
Schir, latt it nevir in toun be tald,
That I sould be ane Yuillis yald!

My mane is turned in to quhyt,
And thairof ye haff all the wyt![2]
Quhen uther horss had bran to byt
I gat bot griss,[3] cuype[4] gif I wald.
Schir, latt it nevir in toun be tald
That I sould be ane Yuillis yald.

I was nevir dautit[5] into stabell,
My lyf hes bene so miserable,
My hyd to offer I am abill
For evill schom strae that I reive wald.[6]
Schir, latt it nevir in toun be tald,
That I sould be ane Yuillis yald!

And yitt, suppois my thrift[7] be thyne,
Gif that I die your aucht[8] within,
Latt nevir the soutteris[9] have my skin,
With uglie gumes to be gnawin.[10]
Schir, latt it nevir in toun be tald
That I sould be ane Yuillis yald!

The court hes done my curage cuill,[11]
And maid me [ane] forriddin muill;[12]
Yett, to weir trappouris[13] at this Yuill,
I wald be spurrit at everie spald.[14]
Schir, latt it nevir in toun be tald
That I sould be ane Yuillis yald!

RESPONSIO REGIS

Eftir our wrettingis, thesaurer,[15]
Tak in this gray horss, Auld Dunbar,
Quhilk in my aucht with schervice trew
In lyart[16] changeit is in hew.
Gar howss[17] him now aganis this Yuill,
And busk[18] him lyk ane beschopis muill,
For with my hand I have indost
To pay quhat evir his trappouris cost.

THE DREGY OF DUNBAR MADE TO KING JAMES THE FIFTH BEING IN STIRLING

We that ar heir in hevins glory,
To yow that ar in purgatory,
Commendis us on our hairtly wyiss;
I mene we folk in parradyis,

[1] My eye-teeth are projecting high. [2] blame. [3] grass. [4] bite. [5] petted. [6] ill-kept(?) straw that I would take eagerly. [7] earnings. [8] in your possession. [9] shoemakers. [10] gnawed (for softening and tanning). [11] has cooled my spirit. [12] over-ridden mule. [13] trappings. [14] joint. [15] treasurer. [16] To grey. [17] clothe. [18] deck.

In Edinburcht with all mirriness,
To yow of Strivilling in distress,
Quhair nowdir[19] pleasance nor delyt is,
For pety thus ane Apostill wrytis.
O! ye heremeitis and hankersaidilis,[20]
That takis your pennance at your tablis,
And eitis nocht meit restorative,
Nor drynkis no wyn confortative,
Bot aill, and that is thyn and small:
With few coursis into your hall,
But[21] cumpany of lordis and knychtis,
Or ony uder[22] gudly wichtis,
Solitar walkand your allone,
Seing no thing bot stok and stone;
Out of your panefull purgatory,
To bring yow to the bliss of glory,
Off Edinburgh the mirry toun
We sall begyn ane cairfull soun;
Ane dergy[23] devoit and meik,
The Lord of bliss doing beseik[24]
Yow to delyver out of your noy,[25]
And bring yow sone to Edinburgh ioy,
For to be mirry amang us;
And sa the dergy begynis thuss.

LECTIO PRIMA

The Fader, the Sone, and Haly Gaist,
The mirthfull Mary virgene chaist,
Of angellis all the ordouris nyne,
And all the hevinly court devyne,
Sone bring yow fra the pyne and wo
Of Strivilling, every court-manis fo,
Agane to Edinburghis ioy and bliss,
Quhair wirschep, welth, and weilfar is,
Pley, plesance, and eik honesty:
Say ye amen, for cheritie.

RESPONSIO, TU AUTEM DOMINE

Tak consolatioun in your pane,
In tribulatioun tak consolatioun,
Out of vexatioun cum hame agane,
Tak consolatioun in your pane.

JUBE DOMINE BENEDICERE

Oute of distress of Strivilling toun
To Edinburcht bliss, God mak yow boun.[26]

LECTIO SECUNDA

Patriarchis, profeitis, and appostillis deir,
Confessouris, virgynis, and marteris cleir,
And all the saitt[27] celestiall,
Devotely we upoun thame call,

[19] neither. [20] hermits and anchorites. [21] Without. [22] other. [23] dirge. [24] beseeching. [25] annoy, pain. [26] ready. [27] court.

That sone out of your panis fell,
Ye may in hevin heir with us dwell,
To eit swan, cran, pertrik, and plever,[1]
And every fische that swymis in rever;
To drynk with us the new fresche wyne,
That grew upoun the rever of Ryne,
Ffresche fragrant clairettis out of France,
Of Angerss and of Orliance,
With mony ane courss of grit dyntie:[2]
Say ye amen, for cheritie.

RESPONSORIUM, TU AUTEM DOMINE

God and Sanct Jeill[3] heir yow convoy
Baith sone and weill, God and Sanct Jeill,
To sonce and seill,[4] solace and joy,
God and Sanct Geill heir yow convoy.
Ont of Strivilling panis fell,
In Edinburght ioy sone mot ye dwell.

LECTIO TERTIA

We pray to all the Sanctis of hevin,
That ar aboif the sterris sevin,
Yow to deliver out of your pennance,
That ye may sone play, sing, and dance
Heir in to Edinburcht and mak gude cheir,
Quhair welth and weilfair is, but weir;[5]
And I that dois your panis discryve[6]
Thinkis for to vissy[7] yow belyve
Nocht in desert with yow to dwell,
Bot as the angell Sanct Gabriell
Dois go betwene fra heviuis glory
To thame that are in purgatory,
And in thair tribulatioun
To gif thame consolatioun,
And schaw thame quhen thair panis ar past,
Thay sall till hevin cum at last;
And how nane servis[9] to haif sweitness
That nevir taistit bittirness,
And thairfoir how suld ye considdir
Of Edinburcht bliss, quhen ye cum hiddir,
Bot gif[10] ye taistit had befoir
Of Strivilling toun the panis soir;
And thairfoir tak in patience
Your pennance and your abstinence,
And ye sal cum, or Yule begyn,
Into the bliss that we ar in;
Quhilk grant the glorius Trinitie!
Say ye amen, for cheritie.

RESPONSORIUM

Cum hame and dwell no moir in Strivilling;
Frome hiddouss hell cum hame and dwell,
Quhair fische to sell is non bot spirling;[11]
Cum hame and dwell no moir in Strivilling.

Et ne nos inducas in temptationem de Strivilling:
Sed libera nos a malo illius.
Requiem Edinburgi dona eijs, Domine,
Et lux ipsius luceat eijs.
A porta tristitie de Strivilling,
Erue, Domine, animas et corpora eorum.
Credo gustare statim vinum Edinburgi,
In villa viventium.
Requiescant Edinburgi. Amen.
Domine, exaudi orationem meam,
Et clamor meus ad te veniat.

OREMUS

Deus qui iustos et corde humiles
Ex omni eorum tribulatione liberare dignatus es,
Libera famulos tuos apud villam de Stirling versantes
A penis et tristitijs eiusdem,
Et ad Edinburgi gaudia eos perducas,
Vt requiescat Strivilling. Amen.

Heir endis Dunbaris Dergy to the King, bydand[12] *to lang in Stirling.*

THE BALLAD OF KIND KITTOK

My Gudame wes a gay wif, bot scho wes rycht gend,[13]
Scho duelt furth fer in to France, apon Falkland fellis;
Thay callit her Kynd Kittok, quhasa hir weill kend:[14]
Scho wes like a caldrone cruke[15] cler under kellis;[16]
Thay threpit[17] that scho deit of thrist, and maid a gud end.
Efter hir dede,[18] scho dredit[19] nought in hevin for to duell;
And sa to hevin the hieway dreidless scho wend,
Yit scho wanderit, and yeid by[20] to ane elriche[21] well.
Scho met thar, as I wene,
Ane ask[22] rydand on a snaill,
And cryit, 'Ourtane[23] fallow, haill!'
And raid ane inche behind the taill,
Till it wes neir evin.

[1] partridge and plover. [2] daintiness. [3] Giles. [4] abundance and happiness. [5] without doubt. [6] describe. [7] visit. [8] soon. [9] deserves. [10] unless. [11] sprats. [12] dwelling. [13] genteel. [14] knew. [15] pot-hook. [16] head-dress. [17] insisted. [18] death. [19] doubted. [20] went aside. [21] fairy. [22] newt. [23] Overtaken.

Sa scho had hap to be horsit to hir herbry,[1]
Att ane ailhous neir hevin, it nyghttit[2] thaim thare;
Scho deit of thrist in this warld, that gert hir be so dry,
Scho never eit, bot drank our mesur[3] and mair.
Scho slepit quhill the morne at none, and rais airly;
And to the yettis[4] of hevin fast can[5] the wif fair,[6]
And by Sanct Petir, in at the yet, scho stall[7] prevely:
God lukit and saw hir lattin in, and lewch[8] his hert sair.
And thar, yeris sevin
Scho levit a gud life,
And wes our Ladyis hen wif:
And held Sanct Petir at stryfe,
Ay quhill scho wes in hevin.

Sche lukit out on a day, and thoght ryght lang[9]
To se the ailhous beside, in till an evill hour;
And out of hevin the hie gait[10] cowth[11] the wif gang
For to get hir ane fresche drink; the aill of hevin wes sour.
Scho come againe to hevinnis yet, quhen the bell rang,
Sanct Petir hat hir with a club, quhill a gret clour[12]
Rais in hir heid, becaus the wif yeid[13] wrang.
Than to the ailhous agane scho ran, the pycharis[14] to pour,
And for to brew, and baik.
Frendis, I pray you hertfully,
Gif ye be thristy or dry,
Drink with my Guddame, as ye ga by,
Anys[15] for my saik.

HOW DUNBAR WAS DESIRED TO BE A FRIAR

This nycht befoir the dawing[16] cleir,
Me thocht Sanct Francis did to me appeir,
With ane religious abbeit[17] in his hand,
And said, 'In thiss go cleith[18] the, my serwand;
Reffuss the warld, for thow mon[19] be a freir.'
With him and with his abbeit bayth I skarrit,[20]
Lyk to ane man that with a gaist wes marrit:[21]
Me thocht on bed he layid it me abone,
Bot on the flure delyverly[22] and sone
I lap thairfra, and nevir wald cum nar it.

Quoth he, 'Quhy skarris thow with this holy weid?
Cleith the thairin, for weir[23] it thow most neid;
Thow, that hes lang done Venus lawis teiche,
Sall now be freir, and in this abbeit preiche;
Delay it nocht, it mon be done but dreid.'[24]

Quod I, 'Sanct Francis, loving be the till,[25]
And thankit mot thow be of thy gude will
To me, that of thy clayis[26] ar so kynd;
Bot thame to weir it nevir come in my mynd;
Sweit Confessour, thow tak it nocht in ill.

'In haly legendis haif I hard allevin,[27]
Ma[28] sanctis of bischoppis nor freiris, be sic sevin;[29]
Off full few freiris that hes bene sanctis I reid;
Quhairfoir ga bring to me ane bischopis weid,
Gife evir thow wald my saule gaid[30] unto Hevin.'

'My brethir oft hes maid the supplicationis,
Be epistillis, sermonis, and relationis,
To tak the abyte, bot thow did postpone;
But ony process,[31] cum on thairfoir annone,
All sircumstance put by and excusationis.'

'Gif evir my fortoun wes to be a freir,
The dait thairof is past full mony a yeir;
For into every lusty toun and place
Off all Yngland, frome Berwick to Kalice,
I haif in to thy habeit maid gud cheir.

'In freiris weid full fairly haif I fleichit,[32]
In it haif I in pulpet gon and preichit
In Derntoun kirk, and eik in Canterberry;
In it I past at Dover our[33] the ferry
Throw Piccardy, and thair the peple teichit.

[1] inn. [2] night overtook. [3] beyond measure. [4] gates. [5] did. [6] go. [7] stole. [8] laughed. [9] yearned. [10] high road. [11] did. [12] lump. [13] went. [14] pitchers. [15] once. [16] dawning. [17] habit. [18] clothe. [19] must. [20] was frightened. [21] scared. [22] actively. [23] wear. [24] without doubt. [25] praise be to thee. [26] clothes. [27] alleged. [28] More. [29] by a great deal. [30] guide. [31] Without any ado. [32] flattered. [33] over.

'Als lang as I did beir the freiris style,
In me, God wait, wes mony wrink[1] and wyle;
In me wes falset[2] with every wicht to flatter,
Quhilk mycht be flemit[3] with na haly watter;
I wes ay reddy all men to begyle.'

This freir that did Sanct Francis thair appeir,
Ane fieind he wes in liknes of ane freir;
He vaneist away wtih stynk and fyrie smowk;
With him me thocht all the hous-end he towk,
And I awoik as wy[4] that wes in weir.[6]

A NEW YEAR'S GIFT TO THE KING

My prince in God gif the guid grace,
Joy, glaidnes, confort, and solace,
Play, pleasance, myrth, and mirrie cheir,
In hansell[6] of this guid new yeir.

God gif to the ane blissed chance,
And of all vertew aboundance,
And grace ay for to perseveir,
In hansell of this guid new yeir.

God give the guid prosperitie,
Fair fortoun and felicitie,
Evir mair in earth quhill thow ar heir,
In hansell of this guid new yeir.

The heavinlie Lord his help the send,
Thy realme to reull and to defend,
In peace and justice it to steir,
In hansell of this guid new yeir.

God gif the blis quhair evir thow bownes,[7]
And send the many Fraunce crownes,
Hie liberall heart, and handis nocht sweir,[8]
In hansell of this guid new yeir.

[1] trick. [2] falsehood. [3] banished. [4] man. [5] doubt. [6] As a first gift. [7] goest. [8] reluctant.

GAVIN DOUGLAS

TRANSLATION OF THE ÆNEID

(I, Prologue 1–103)

LAUDE, honor, prasingis, thankis infynite
To the, and thi dulce[1] ornate fresche endite,[2]
Mast reverend Virgill, of Latyne poetis prince,
Gemme of ingine[3] and fluide of eloquence,
Thow peirles perle, patroun of poetrie,
Rois,[4] register,[5] palme, laurer, and glory,
Chosin cherbukle,[6] cheif flour and cedir tree,
Lanterne, leidsterne,[7] mirrour, and *a per se*,
Master of masteris, sweit sours and spring-and well,
Wyde quhar our all[8] ringis thi hevinle bell:
I mene thi crafty werkis curious,
Sa quik, lusty, and mast sentencious,
Plesable, perfyte, and felable in all degre,
As quha the mater held to foir[9] thar ee;
In every volume quhilk the list do[10] write,
Surmonting fer all uther maneir endite,
Lyk as the rois in June with hir sueit smell
The marygulde or dasy doith excell.
Quhy suld I than, with dull forhede and vane,[11]
With ruide engine and barrand emptive[12] brane,
With bad harsk[13] speche and lewit[14] barbour tong,
Presume to write quhar thi sueit bell is rong,
Or contirfait sa precious wourdis deir?
Na, na, nocht sua, bot knele quhen I thame heir.
For quhat compair betuix midday and nycht,
Or quhat compare betuix myrknes[15] and lycht,
Or quhat compare is betuix blak and quhyte,
Far gretar diference betuix my blunt endyte
And thi scharp sugurat sang Virgiliane,
Sa wyslie wrocht with nevir ane word in vane;

[1] sweet. [2] writing. [3] invention, imagination. [4] Rose. [5] standard. [6] carbuncle. [7] lodestar. [8] Quite everywhere. [9] before. [10] it pleased thee. [11] empty. [12] barren, empty. [13] harsh. [14] lewd, ignorant. [15] darkness.

My waverand wit, my cunnyng feble at all,
My mynd mysty, thir ma nocht myss[16] ane fall.
Stra[17] for this ignorant blabring imperfyte
Beside thi polyte termis redemyte;[18]
And no the les with support and correctioun,
For naturall luife and freindfull affectioun
Quhilkis[19] I beir to thi werkis and endyte,
Althocht, God wait, I knaw tharin full lyte,
And that thi facund[20] sentence mycht be song
In our langage als weill as Latyne tong —
Alswele, na, na, impossible war, per de,[21]
Yit with your leif, Virgill, to follow the,
I wald into my rurale vulgar gros,
Write sum savoring of thi Eneados.
Bot sair I drede for to distene[22] the quyte,
Throu my corruptit cadens imperfyte;
Distene the, na forsuith, that ma I nocht,
Weill ma I schaw my burell busteous[23] thocht;
Bot thi work sall enduire in laude and glory,
Bot[24] spot or falt, conding[25] eterne memory.
Thocht I offend, onhermit[26] is thine fame,
Thyne is the thank, and myne sal be the shame.
Quha ma thi versis follow in all degre,
In bewtie, sentence, and in gravite?
Nane is, nor was, nor yit sal be, trow I,
Had, has, or sal have sic crafte in poetrie.
Of Helicon so drank thou dry the fluid
That of the copiose flowith[27] or plenitud
All man[28] purches drink at thi sugurat tone,[29]
So lamp of day thou art, and shynand mone,
All utheris on force mon[28] their lycht beg or borow.
Thou art Vesper, and the day sterne at morow;
Thou Phebus, lychtnar of the planetis all,
I not[30] quhat dewlie I the clepe[31] sall,
For thou art al and sum, quhat nedis moir,
Of Latyne poetis that sens[32] wes or befoir.

[16] there may not fail. [17] A straw. [18] ornate. [19] Which. [20] eloquent. [21] *par Dieu*. [22] sully. [23] uncultivated, rough. [24] Without. [25] deserving. [26] unharmed. [27] abundance. [28] must. [29] tun, wine-cask. [30] know not. [31] call. [32] since.

Of the writis Macrobius, sans fail,
In his grete volume clepit Saturnail,
Thi sawis in sic eloquence doith fleit,[1]
So inventive of rhetorik flouris sueit
Thou art, and hes sa hie profund sentence
Therto perfyte, but ony indigence,
That na lovingis [2] ma do incres thi fame,
Nor na reproche diminew thi guid name.
But sen I am compellit the to translait,
And nocht onlie of my curage, God wait,
Durst interprise sic outragious foli,
Quhar I offend, the les repreif serf [3] I;
And at [4] ye knaw at quhais instaunce I tuik
For to translait this mast excellent buik,
I mene Virgilis volume maist excellent,
Set [5] this my werk full feble be of rent,[6]
At the request of ane lorde of renowne,
Of ancistry noble and illuster barowne,
Fader of bukis, protectour to science and lare,[7]
My speciall gude lord Henry Lord Sanct Clair,
Quhilk with grete instance divers tymes seir,[8]
Prayit me translait Virgill or Omeir;
Quhais plesour suithlie as I understuid,
As neir coniunct [9] to his lordschip in bluid,
So that me thocht his requeist ane command,
Half disparit [10] this wark tuik on hand,
Nocht fullie grantand, nor anis sayand ye,[11]
Bot onelie to assay quhow it mycht be.
Quha mycht ganesay a lord sa gentle and kynd,
That evir hed ony curtasy in thair mynd,
Quhilk beside his innative [12] polecy,
Humanite, curaige, fredome, and chevalry,
Bukis to recollect, to reid and se,
Hes greit delite als evir hed Ptolome?
Quharfor to his nobilite and estaite,
Quhat so it be, this buik I dedicaite,
Writing in the language of Scottis natioun,
And thus I mak my protestacioun.

DEATH OF PRIAM

(II, chap. IX)

Peraventur, of Priamus ye wald speir [13]
How tyde [14] the chance; his fait, gif ye list, heir.
Quhen he the cietie saw takin and doun bet,[15]
And of his palice brokin every yet,[16]
Amyd the secrete closettis eik his fais,[17]
The ald gray [18] all for nocht, to him tays [19]
His hawbrek quhilk was lang furth of usage,[20]
Set on his shoulderis trymbling than for age;
A swerd, but help, about him beltis he,
And ran towart his fais, reddy to de.
Amyd the cloiss,[21] under the hevin all bair,
Stude thair that tyme a mekle fair altaïr,
Neir quhame thar grew a rycht auld laurer tree,
Bowand towart the altair a little wee,[22]
That with his schaddow the goddis did ourheild.[23]
Hecuba thidder, with hir childir, for beild [24]
Ran all in vane, and about the altair swarmis,
Brasand [25] the godlik ymage in thair armis,
As for the storme dowis [26] flockis togidder ilkane.[27]
Bot quhen scho saw how Priamus hes tane
His armour, so as thoch he had bene ying:
'Quhat fulich [28] thocht, my wrechit spous and king,
Movis ye now sic wapnis for to weild?
Quhidder haistis thou?' quod scho, 'Of na sic beild [29]
Have we now mister,[30] nor yit defendouris as ye,
The tyme is nocht ganand [31] thairto, we se.
In caice Hector war present heir, my sone,
He mycht nocht succour Troy, for it is wone.
Quhairfoir, I pray ye, sit doun and cum hiddir,
And lat this altair saif [32] us all togiddir,
Or than at anis all heir lat us de.'
Thus said scho, and, with sic sembland [33] as mycht be,
Him towart hir hes brocht, bot ony threte,[34]
And sete the auld doun in the haly sete.
But lo! Polites, ane of Priamus sonnis,
Quhilk fra the slauchter of Pirrus away run is,
Throw wapnis fleing and his enemyis all,
By lang throwgangis [35] and mony voyd hall;
Woundit he was, and come to seek reskew;
Ardentlie Pirrus can him fast persew,

1 float. 2 praising. 3 deserve. 4 that. 5 Suppose. 6 value. 7 learning. 8 several. 9 allied. 10 in despair. 11 once saying "yea." 12 inborn. 13 ask. 14 betided. 15 beaten. 16 gate.

17 His foe even in the secret chambers. 18 old gray (man). 19 takes. 20 out of use. 21 courtyard. 22 way. 23 protect. 24 shelter. 25 Embracing. 26 doves. 27 each one. 28 foolish. 29 protection. 30 need. 31 advantageous. 32 save. 33 appearance 34 without any threat. 35 passages.

With grundin lance at hand so neir furth strykit,
Almaist he haid him tuichit and arrekit.[1]
Quhill[2] at the last, quhen he is cumin, I wene,
Befoir his faderis and his moderis ene,[3]
Smate him doun deid, in thair sycht quhar he stude,
The gaist he yald[4] with habundance of blude.
Priamus than, thocht he was half deil[5] deid,
Mycht nocht contene his ire nor wordis of feid,[6]
Bot cryis furth: 'For that cruell offence,
And outrageous fuile-hardy violence,
Gif thair be pietie in the hevin aboun
Quhilk takis heid to this that thou hes doun,
The goddis mocht condingly the foryeld,[7]
Eftir thi desert rendring sic ganyeld,[8]
Causit me behald my awine child slane, allace!
And with his blude filit his faderis face.
Bot he, quham by thou fenys[9] thiself byget,
Achill, was nocht to Priame sa hart set;
For he, of right and faith eschamit[10] eik,
Quhen that I come him lawlie to beseik,
The deid body of Hector rendrit me,
And me convoit hame to my citie.'
Thus sayand, the auld waiklie, but force or dynt,
A dart did cast, quhilk, with a pik,[11] can stynt[12]
On his harnys, and in the scheild did hing,
But ony harme or uthir dammaging.
Quod Pirrus, 'Allwais sen thou sais swa,
To Pilleus sone, my fadir, thou most ga;
Ber him this message, ramember weil thou tell
Him all my werkis and deidis sa cruell.
Schaw Neoptolemus is degenerit clene;
Now sall thou dee.' And with that word, in tene,[13]
The auld trumbling towart the altair he drew,
That in the hate blude of his sone, sched new,
Funderit;[14] and Pirrus grippis him by the hair
With his left hand, and with the udir[15] all bair
Drew furth his schynand swerd, quhilk in his syde
Festynnit,[16] and unto the hiltis did it hyde.
Of Priamus thus was the finale fait;[17]
Fortune heir endit his glorius estait.
Seand[18] Ilion all birning in firis broun,
And Troyis wallis fall and tumblit doun;
That riall prince, umquhill,[19] our[20] Asia,
Apone sa fell[21] pepill and ralmis[22] alsua
Ringit[23] in weltht, now by the coist[24] lyis deid
Bot as ane stok, and of hakkit[25] his heid;
A corps, but[26] life, renowne, or uthir fame,
Unknawin of ony wycht quhat was his name.

[1] reached. [2] Till. [3] eyes. [4] yielded. [5] part. [6] feud, hostility. [7] must punish thee according to thy deserts. [8] recompense. [9] by whom thou feignest. [10] ashamed. [11] peck. [12] did stop. [13] anger. [14] Stumbled. [15] other.

MORNING IN MAY

(Prologue to the Twelfth Book of the Æneid)

Dyonea,[27] nycht hyrd, and wach of day,
The starnis chasit of the hevin away,
Dame Cynthea doun rolling in the see,
And Venus lost the bewte of hir e,
Fleand eschamyt[28] within Cylenyus[29] cave;
Mars onbydrew,[30] for all his grundin glave,[31]
Nor frawart[32] Saturn, from his mortall speyr,[33]
Durst langar in the firmament appeir,
Bot stall abak yond in his regioun far
Behynd the circulat warld of Jupiter;
Nycthemyne,[34] affrayit of the lycht,
Went undir covert, for gone was the nycht;
As fresch Aurora, to mychty Tythone spous,
Ischit[35] of hir safron bed and evir[36] hous,
In crammysin[37] cled and granit[38] violat,
With sanguyne cape, and selvage purpurat,[39]
Onschot the windois of hir large hall,
Spred all wyth rosys, and full of balm ryall,
And eik the hevinly portis crystallyne
Upwarpis braid,[40] the warld to illumyn.
The twinkling stremowris[41] of the orient
Sched purpour sprangis[42] with gold and asure ment,[43]
Persand[44] the sabill barmkyn[45] nocturnall,
Bet doun the skyis clowdy mantill wall:
Eous the steid, with ruby hamis[46] reid,
Abuf the seyis[47] lyftis furth his heid,

[16] Stuck. [17] fate. [18] Seeing. [19] formerly. [20] over. [21] many. [22] realms. [23] Reigned. [24] coast. [25] hacked off. [26] without. [27] Venus (as evening and morning star). [28] ashamed. [29] Mercury's. [30] withdrew. [31] sharp ground sword. [32] perverse. [33] deadly sphere. [34] Nyctimene. See Ovid, *Meta.* ii, 590. [35] Issued. [36] ivory. [37] crimson cloth. [38] deep dyed. [39] purple. [40] Opens wide. [41] streamers. [42] rays. [43] mixed. [44] Piercing. [45] battlement. [46] hames — part of a horse-collar. [47] Above the seas.

Of cullour soyr,[1] and sum deill broun as berry,
For to alichtyn and glaid our emyspery,
The flambe owtbrastyng at his neys thyrlys;[2]
Sa fast Phaeton wyth the quhip him quhirlys,
To roll Apollo his faderis goldin chair,
That schrowdyth all the hevynnis and the ayr;
Quhill[3] schortly, with the blesand[4] torch of day,
Abilyeit[5] in his lemand[6] fresch array,
Furth of hys palyce ryall ischyt Phebus,
Wyth goldin croun and vissage gloryus,
Crysp[7] hairis, brycht as chrysolite or topace,
For quhais hew mycht nane behald his face,
The fyry sparkis brastyng fra his ene,
To purge the ayr, and gylt the tendyr grene,
Defundand[8] from hys sege[9] etheriall
Glaid influent aspectis celicall.[10]
Before his regale hie magnificens
Mysty vapour upspringand, sweit as sens,[11]
In smoky soppis[12] of donk dewis wak,[13]
Moich hailsum stovis ourheildand the slak;[14]
The aureat fanys[15] of hys trone soverane
With glytrand glans ourspred the occiane,
The large fludis lemand all of lycht
Bot with a blenk[16] of his supernale sycht.
For to behald, it was a gloir to se
The stabillit[17] wyndis and the cawmyt[18] see,
The soft sessoun, the firmament serene,
The lowne[19] illumynat air, the fyrth amene;[20]
The sylver scalit fyschis on the greit[21]
Ourthwort[22] cleir stremis sprynkland[23] for the heyt,
Wyth fynnis schynand broun as synopar,[24]
And chyssell[25] talis, stowrand[26] heyr and thar;
The new cullour alychtnyng all the landis,
Forgane thir stannyris[27] schane the beryall strandis,
Quhill the reflex of the diurnal bemis
The bene bonkis[28] kest ful of variant glemis,
And lusty Flora did hir blomis spreid
Under the feit of Phebus sulyart[29] steid;
The swardit soyll enbroud wyth selcouth[30] hewis
Wod and forest obumbrat[31] with thar bewis,
Quhois blissfull branchis, porturat[32] on the grund,
With schaddois schene schew rochis ruby-cund:
Towris, turattis, kyrnellis,[33] pynnaclis hie
Of kirkis, castellis, and ilke fair cite,
Stude payntit, every fyall, fane, and stage,[34]
Apon the plane grund, by thar awin umbrage.
Of Eolus north blastis havand no dreyd,
The sulye[35] spred hyr braid bosum on breid,[36]
Zephyrus' confortabill inspiratioun
For till ressave law in hyr barm[37] adoun;
The cornis croppis[38] and the beris new brerd[39]
Wyth glaidsum garmond revesting the erd;
So thik the plantis sprang in every pece,
The feyldis ferleis[40] of thar fructuus flece;
Byssy dame Ceres, and proud Pryapus,
Rejosyng of the planis plenteus,
Plenyst[41] sa plesand and maist propirly,
By nature nurist wondir nobilly.
On the fertill skyrt lappis of the ground
Streking[42] on breid ondyr the cirkill round,
The variant vestur of the venust vaill[43]
Schrowdis the scherald fur,[44] and every faill[45]
Ourfret with fulyeis[46] of figuris full divers,
The spray byspreut with spryngand sproutis dispers;[47]
For callour[48] humour on the dewy nycht,
Rendryng[49] sum place the gers pilis[50] thar hycht
Als far as catal, the lang symmeris day,
Had in thar pastur eyt and knyp[51] away;
And blisfull blossummis in the blomyt yard
Submittis thar hedis in the yong sonnis salfgard;
Ive levis rank ourspred the barmkin[52] wall,
The bloomyt hawthorn cled his pikis[53] all;
Furth of fresch burgionis the wyne grapis ying
Endlang the treilyeis dyd on twystis hing.
The lowkyt buttonis[54] on the gemmyt treis
Ourspredand leyvis of naturis tapestreis;

1 sorrel. 2 nostrils. 3 Till. 4 blazing. 5 Attired. 6 gleaming. 7 Curly. 8 Pouring. 9 seat. 10 celestial. 11 incense. 12 clouds. 13 wet. 14 Moist wholesome mists covering the swamp. 15 The golden vanes. 16 glance. 17 stilled. 18 calmed sea. 19 quiet. 20 woodland pleasant. 21 gravel. 22 Athwart. 23 darting. 24 cinnabar. 25 shaped like chisels. 26 rushing. 27 Opposite these gravelly shores. 28 pleasant banks. 29 gleaming. 30 strange. 31 shaded. 32 portrayed. 33 crenelations. 34 pinnacle, vane, and storey. 35 soil. 36 abroad. 37 low in her bosom. 38 tops. 39 barley newly sprouted. 40 wonder. 41 Replenished. 42 Stretching. 43 pleasant vale. 44 new mown furrow. 45 turf. 46 Adorned with leaves. 47 here and there. 48 refreshing. 49 Restoring. 50 grass blades. 51 cropped. 52 rampart. 53 prickles, twigs. 54 unopened buds.

Soft gresy verdour eftir balmy schowris
On curland stalkis smyling to thar flowris;
Behaldand thame sa mony divers hew,
Sum pers,[1] sum paill, sum burnet,[2] and sum blew,
Sum grece,[3] sum gowlis,[4] sum purpour, sum sangwane,
Blanchit or broune, fawch[5] yallow mony ane,
Sum hevynly cullorit in celestiall gre,[6]
Sum wattry hewit as the haw wally see,[7]
And sum depart[8] in frekly[9] red and quhyte,
Sum brycht as gold with aureat levis lyte.
The dasy dyd on breid[10] hir crownell smaill
And every flour onlappit[11] in the daill;
In battill gyrs burgionys the banwart wyld,[12]
The clavyr, catcluke,[13] and the cammamyld;
The flour delice furth spred his hevinly hew,
Flour dammes,[14] and columby blank[15] and blew;
Seyr[16] downis smaill on dent de lion sprang,
The ying grene blomyt straberry levis amang;
Gymp gerraflouris[17] thar royn[18] levys unschet,
Fresche prymros, and the purpour violet;
The roys knoppis, tetand[19] furth thar heyd,
Gan chyp,[20] and kyth[21] thar vermel lippis red,
Crysp scarlet levis sum scheddand, baith attanis
Kest fragrant smell amyd from goldin granis;
Hevinly lylleis, with lokerand[22] toppis quhyte,
Oppynnit and schew thar creistis redymyte,[23]
The balmy vapour from thar sylkyn croppis
Distylland hailsum sugurat hunny droppis,
And sylver schakaris[24] gan fra levis hyng,
Wyth crystal sprayngis[25] on the verdour ying;
The plane pulderyt[26] with semely settis[27] sound,
Bedyit[28] full of dewy peirlis round,

[1] blue. [2] brown. [3] gray. [4] red. [5] dun. [6] degree. [7] wan wavy sea. [8] divided. [9] speckled. [10] spread abroad. [11] opened. [12] In rich rank grass burgeons the banewort wild. [13] the clover, bird's foot. [14] Damask rose. [15] columbine, white. [16] Many. [17] Pretty gilly-flowers. [18] vermilion. [19] rosebuds peeping. [20] burst. [21] show. [22] curling. [23] ornate. [24] dew-drops. [25] sprays. [26] powdered. [27] shoots. [28] Moistened.

So that ilk burgioun, syon,[29] herb, and flour,
Wolx all enbalmyt of the fresch liquour,
And bathit hait[30] did in dulce humouris fleit,[31]
Quharof the beis wrocht thar hunny sweit,
By michty Phebus operatiounis
In sappy subtell exalatiounis.
Forgane[32] the cummyn of this prince potent,
Redolent odour up from rutis sprent,[33]
Hailsum of smell as ony spicery,
Tryakle,[34] droggis, or electuary,
Seroppis, sewane,[35] sugour, and synamome,
Precyus inunctment, salve, or fragrant pome,[36]
Aromatik gummis, or ony fyne potioun,
Must,[37] myr, aloes, or confectioun;
Ane paradice it semyt to draw neyr
Thyr galyart[38] gardyngis and ilke greyn herbere.[39]
Maist amyabill walxis the amerant medis:[40]
Swannys swouchis[41] throw out the rysp[42] and redis,
Our al thir lowys[43] and the fludis gray
Seyrsand by kynd[44] a place quhar thai suld lay:
Phebus red fowle hys corall creist can steyr,[45]
Oft streking[46] furth hys hekkyll,[47] crawand cleir,
Amyd the wortis[48] and the rutys gent
Pykland[49] his meyt in alleis quhar he went,
Hys wifis, Toppa and Pertelok, hym by,
As byrd al tyme that hantis[50] bygamy:
The payntit poune,[51] pasand with plomys gym,[52]
Kest up his taill, a proud plesand quheil rym,[53]
Yschrowdryt in hys fedramme[54] brycht and schene,
Schapand[55] the prent of Argus hundreth ene:
Amang the brounis[56] of the olyve twestis[57]
Seyr[58] small fowlis wirkand crafty nestis,
Endlang the hedgeis thyk, and on rank akis,[59]
Ilk byrd rejosyng with thar myrthfull makis.[60]

[29] scion. [30] warm. [31] float. [32] Against. [33] sprang. [34] Medicinal syrup. [35] savin, a drug made from a variety of juniper. [36] scent-ball. [37] Musk. [38] gay. [39] garden or arbour. [40] emerald meads. [41] rustle. [42] bulrushes. [43] lakes. [44] Seeking by nature. [45] raise. [46] stretching. [47] long shining feathers on a cock's neck. [48] herbs. [49] Pecking. [50] practises. [51] peacock. [52] neat. [53] wheel-rim. [54] Covered with his plumage. [55] Showing. [56] branches. [57] twigs. [58] Many. [59] oaks. [60] mates.

In corneris and cleir fenystaris[1] of glas
Full byssely Aragne wevand was,
To knit hyr nettis and hir wobbys sle,[2]
Tharwith to caucht the myghe and littill fle:[3]
So dusty puldyr upstowris[4] in every streyt,
Quhill corby[5] gaspyt for the fervent heyt.
Under the bewys beyn[6] in lusty valis,
Within fermans[7] and parkis cloys of palys,
The bustuus bukkis rakis[8] furth on raw;
Heyrdis of hertis throw the thyk wod schaw,
Baith the brokettis,[9] and with brayd burnyst tyndis;[10]
The sprutlyt[11] calvys sowkand the reid hyndis,
The yong fownis followand the dun dayis,[12]
Kyddis skippand throw ronnis[13] eftir rayis.[14]
In lyssouris[15] and on leys[16] littill lammis
Full tait and trig[17] socht bletand to thar dammis.
Tydy ky lowys,[18] veilys[19] by thame rynnis;
All snog and slekyt worth[20] thir bestis skynnis.
On salt stremis wolx[21] Doryda and Thetis,
By rynnand strandis Nymphis and Naedes,
Syk[22] as we clepe wenchis and damysellis,
In gresy gravis[23] wandrand by spring wellis,
Of blomyt branchis and flowris quhite and rede
Plettand thar lusty chaiplettis for thar hede;
Sum sing sangis, dansis ledys,[24] and roundis,[25]
Wyth vocis schill,[26] quhill all the daill resoundis;
Quharso thai walk into thar caraling,
For amorus lays doith all the rochis ryng.
Ane sang, 'The schip salis our the salt fame,
Will bring thir merchandis and my lemman hame;'
Sum other singis, 'I wil be blyth and lycht,
Myne hart is lent apon sa gudly wycht.'
And thochtfull luffaris rowmys to and fro,
To leis[27] thar pane, and plene[28] thar joly wo,

1 windows. 2 subtle webs. 3 midge and little fly. 4 arises. 5 Till the crow. 6 beauteous boughs. 7 enclosures. 8 bold bucks range. 9 two-year-old red-deer. 10 prongs. 11 speckled. 12 does. 13 thickets. 14 roes. 15 pastures. 16 meadows, leas. 17 sportive and active. 18 Fat kine low. 19 calves. 20 are. 21 waxed, appeared. 22 Such. 23 groves. 24 lead. 25 round dances, carols. 26 clear. 27 lose. 28 complain.

Eftyr thar gys,[29] now singand, now in sorow,
With hartis pensyve, the lang symmeris morow.
Sum ballettis lyst endyte of his lady,
Sum levis in hoip, and sum al utterly
Disparyt is, and sa quyte owt of grace,
His purgatory he fyndis in every place.
To pleis his luife sum thocht to flat and fene,[30]
Sum to hant[31] bawdry and onlesum mene;[32]
Sum rownys[33] to hys fallow, thame betwene,
Hys mery stouth[34] and pastans[35] lait yistrene.
Smyland sayis ane, 'I couth in previte
Schaw the a bowrd.'[36] 'Ha, quhat be that?' quod he.
'Quhat thing?—That moste be secret,' sayd the tother.
'Gude Lord! mysbeleif ye your verray brother?'
'Na, nevyr a deill, bot harkis quhat I wald;
Thou mon be prevy.' 'Lo, my hand uphald!'
'Than sal thou walk at evin.' Quod he, 'Quhiddyr?'
'In sik a place heyr west, we bayth togiddyr,
Quhar scho so freschly sang this hyndir[37] nycht;
Do chois the ane and I sal quynch the lycht.'
'I sal be thar I hope,' quod he, and lewch;[38]
'Ya, now I knaw the mater weill enewch.'
Thus oft dywulgat[39] is this schamefull play,
Na thyng according to our hailsum May,
Bot rathyr contagius and infective,
And repugnant that sessoun nutrytive,
Quhen new curage kytlis[40] all gentill hartis,
Seand throu kynd ilk thyng springis and revertis.
Dame Naturis menstralis, on that other part,
Thayr blyssfull bay[41] entonyng every art,
To beyt thar amouris of thar nychtis baill,[42]
The merll, the mavys, and the nychtingale
With mery notis myrthfully furth brest,
Enforsing thame quha mycht do clynk it best.[43]
The cowschet crowdis and pirkis on the rys,[44]
The styrlyng changis divers stevynnys nys;[45]

29 guise, fashion. 30 flatter and feign. 31 practise. 32 unlawful means. 33 whispers. 34 stolen pleasures. 35 pastime. 36 jest. 37 last. 38 laughed. 39 published. 40 tickles. 41 chorus. 42 To rid their loves of the night's tedium. 43 make it ring. 44 The ring-dove (cushat) coos and perches on the twig. 45 delicate notes.

The sparrow chyrmis [1] in the wallis clyft;
Goldspynk and lyntquhyte fordynnand the lyft; [2]
The gukgo galis, [3] and so quytteris [4] the quaill,
Quhill ryveris rerdyt, [5] schawis, and every vaill,
And tender twystis trymlyt on the treis,
For byrdis sang and bemyng [6] of the beis.
In wrablis [7] dulce of hevynly armonyis
The larkis, lowd releschand [8] in the skyis,
Lovys thar lege [9] with tonys curyus,
Baith to Dame Natur and the fresch Venus
Rendryng hie lawdis in thar observance,
Quhais suguryt throtis mayd glayd hartis dans,
And al small fowlys singis on the spray:
'Welcum, the lord of lycht and lamp of day,
Welcum, fostyr [10] of tendir herbys grene,
Welcum, quyknar of florist flowris schene,
Welcum, support of euery rute and vane! [11]
Welcum, confort of alkynd fruyt and grane!
Welcum, the byrdis beyld [12] apon the breyr!
Welcum, maister and rewlar of the yeyr!
Welcum, weilfar of husbandis at the plewis!
Welcum, reparar of woddis, treis, and bewis;
Welcum, depayntar of the blomyt medis!
Welcum, the lyfe of euery thing that spredis!
Welcum, stourour [13] of alkynd bestiall!
Welcum be thi brycht bemys, glading all!
Welcum celestiall myrrour and aspy,
Attechyng [14] all that hantis sluggardy!'
And with this word, in chalmer quhair I lay,
The nynt morow of fresche temperat May,
On fut I sprent [15] into my bayr sark, [16]
Wilfull for till compleyt my langsum wark
Twichand [17] the lattyr buke of Dan Virgill,
Quhilk me had tareyt al to lang a quhile,
And to behald the cummyng of this kyng, [18]
That was sa welcum tyll all warldly thyng,
With sic tryumphe and pompos curage glayd
Than of his souerane chymmis, [19] as is sayd,
Newly arissyn in hys estayt ryall,
That, by hys hew, but orleger [20] or dyall,
I knew it was past four houris of day,
And thocht I wald na langar ly in May

[1] chirps. [2] making the air resound. [3] cuckoo calls. [4] twitters. [5] resounded. [6] din. [7] warbles. [8] releasing (their voices). [9] Praise their liege lord. [10] fosterer. [11] vein, pore. [12] shelter. [13] stirrer. [14] Reproving. [15] sprang. [16] shirt. [17] Touching. [18] the sun. [19] mansions. [20] without one to call the hours.

Les Phebus suld me losanger attaynt: [21]
For Progne had, or than, sung hyr complaynt,
And eik hir dreidful systir Philomene
Hir lais endit, and in woddis grene
Hyd hir selvin, eschamyt of hyr chance;
And Esacus [22] completis his pennance
In riveris, fludis, and on every laik;
And Peristera [23] byddis luffaris awaik;
'Do serve my lady Venus heyr with me!
Lern thus to mak your observance,' quod she,
'Into myne hartis ladeis sweit presens
Behaldis how I beinge, [24] and do reverens.'
Hir nek scho wrinklis, trasing mony fold,
With plomis glitterand, asur apon gold,
Rendring a cullour betwix grene and blew
In purpour glans of hevinly variant hew;
I meyn our awin native bird, gentill dow, [25]
Syngand in hyr kynd 'I come hidder to wow;'
So pryklyng hyr grene curage for to crcwd [26]
In amorus voce and wowar soundis lowd,
That, for the dynning of hir wanton cry,
I irkyt of my bed and mycht nocht ly,
Bot gan me blys, [27] syne in my wedis dres,
And, for it was ayr morow, or tyme of mes, [28]
I hynt a scriptour [29] and my pen furth tuike.
Syne thus begouth of Virgill the twelt buike.

KING HART [30]

(ll. 1–80)

King Hart in to his cumlie castell strang,
Closit about with craft and meikill ure, [31]
So semlie wes he set his folk amang,
That he no dout had of misaventure;
So proudlie wes he polist, plane, and pure,
With youthheid and his lustie levis grene;
So fair, so fresche, so liklie to endure,
And als so blyth as bird in symmer schene.

For wes he never yit with schouris schot,
Nor yit ourrun with rouk [32] or ony rayne;
In all his lusty lecam [33] nocht ane spot;
Na never had experience into payne,

[21] call me sluggard.
[22] Aesacus, son of Priam, changed into a bird, the diver, after having caused the death of his wife.
[23] dove. [24] bow. [25] dove. [26] coo. [27] cross. [28] early morn, ere time of mass.
[29] seized a writing-case.
[30] The text is based on the Maitland MS. as printed by Gregory Smith in *Specimens of Middle Scots*.
[31] work. [32] mist. [33] body.

Bot alway into lyking,[1] nocht to layne;[2]
Onlie to love and verrie gentilnes
He wes inclynit cleinlie to remane,
And wonn[3] under the wyng of wantownnes.

Yit was this wourthy wicht King under warde,
For wes he nocht at fredome utterlie.
Nature had lymmit[4] folk for thair reward
This godlie king to governe and to gy;[5]
For so thai kest[6] thair tyme to occupy
In welthis for to wyne; for thai him teichit
All lustis for to lane[7] and underly;[8]
So prevelie thai preis him and him preicheid.

First Strenth, (. . . .) Lust, and Wantownnes,
Grein Lust, Disport, Jelousy, and Invy;
Freschnes, Newgot,[9] Waistgude,[10] and Wilfulnes,
Delyvernes, Fulehardenes thairby;
Gentrice, Fredome,[11] Price, Previe Espy,
Wantwyt, Vanegloir, Prodigalitie,
Unrest, Nichtwalk, and felloun Glutony,
Unricht, Dyme Sicht, with Slicht and Subtilitie.

Thir war the inwarde ythand[12] servitouris,
Quhilk gouernouris war to this nobil king,
And kepit him inclynit to thair curis;
Se wes thair nocht in erde that ever micht bring
Ane of thir folk away fra his duelling.
Thus to thair terme thay serve for thair rewarde,[13]
Dansing, disport, singing, revelling,
With bissines all blyth to pleis the lairde.

Thir folk, with all the femell[14] thai micht fang,
Quhilk nummerit ane milyon and weill mo,
That wer upbred as servitouris of lang,[15]
And with this king wald wonn[16] in weill and wo,
For favour nor for feid[17] wald found[18] him fro
Unto the tyme thair dait be run and past:

That gold nor gude micht gar thame fro him go,
No greif nor grame[19] suld grayth[20] thame so agast.

Fyve servitouris this king he had without,
That teichit war ay tressoun to espy;
Thai watchit ay the wallis round about
For innemeis that of hapning ay come by:
Ane for the day, quhilk jugeit certanly,
With cure to ken the colour of all hew;
Ane for the nicht, that harknit bissely
Out of quhat airt[21] that ever the wyndis blew.

Syne[22] wes thair ane to taist all nutriment
That to this king wes servit at the deiss;
Ane uther wes all fovellis[23] for to sent,[24]
Of licour or of ony lustie meiss;
The fyft thair wes quhilk culd all [ken][25] but leiss,[26]
The heit, the cauld, the hard, and eik the soft —
Ane ganand[27] servand bayth for weir and pece;
Yit hes thir folk thair king betrasit[28] oft.

Honour persewit to the kingis yet;[29]
Thir folk said all thai wald nocht lat him in,
Becaus thai said thair lord to feist wes set,
With all his lustie servandis more and myn;[30]
Bot he ane port had enterit with ane gyn,[31]
And up he can in haist to the grit toure,
And said he suld it parall[32] all with fyn
And fresche delyt, with mony florist floure.

So strang this king him thocht his castell stude,
With mony towre and turat crownit hie:
About the wall thair ran ane water woid,[33]
Blak, stinkand, sowr, and salt as is the sey,
That on the wallis wiskit,[34] gre be gre,[35]
Boldning[36] to ryis the castell to confound;
Bot thai within maid sa grit melody,
That for thair reird[37] thay micht nocht heir the sound.

1 pleasure. 2 not to lie, i.e., to tell the truth. 3 dwell. 4 appointed. 5 guide. 6 planned. 7 hide. So G. Smith from Maitland MS. Pinkerton reads *love* = love; Small *lave*, and explains as "subject to," a doubtful gloss. 8 experience. 9 New Fashion. 10 Prodigality. 11 Generosity. 12 diligent. 13 interests. 14 family. 15 for a long time. 16 dwell. 17 hostility. 18 go.

19 anger, sorrow. 20 make. 21 direction. 22 Then. 23 provisions. 24 smell. 25 know. 26 without lies. 27 profitable. 28 betrayed. 29 gate. 30 greater and less. 31 trick. 32 decorate. 33 wild. 34 splashed. 35 step. 36 Swelling. 37 noise.

HONOUR[1]

O HIE honour, sweit hevinlie flour degest,[2]
Gem verteous, maist precious, gudliest.
For hie renoun thou art guerdoun conding,[3]
Of worschip kend[4] the glorious end and rest,
But[5] quhome in richt na worthie wicht may lest.
Thy greit puissance may maist avance all thing,
And poverall to mekill availl[6] sone bring.
I the require sen thow but peir[7] art best,
That efter this in thy hie blis we ring.[8]

Of grace thy face in everie place sa schynis,
That sweit all spreit baith heid and feit inclynis,[9]
Thy gloir afoir for till imploir remeid.[10]

He docht[11] richt nocht, quhilk out of thocht the tynis;[12]
Thy name but blame, and royal fame divine is;
Thow port, at schort,[13] of our comfort and reid[14]
Till bring all thing till glaiding efter deid,
All wicht but sicht of thy greit micht ay crynis,[15]
O schene,[16] I mene[17] nane may sustene thy feid.[18]

Haill rois maist chois till clois[19] thy fois greit micht,
Haill, stone quhilk schone upon the throne of licht,
Vertew, quhais trew sweit dew ouirthrew al vice,
Was ay ilk day gar[20] say the way of licht;
Amend, offend,[21] and send our end ay richt.
Thou stant, ordant as sanct, of grant maist wise,
Till be supplie,[22] and the hie gre[23] of price.
Delite the tite me quite of site to dicht,[24]
For I apply schortlie to thy devise.[25]

[1] This "ballade in commendation of honour and verteu" ends "The Palace of Honour," and with its internal rhymes is a good example of the virtuosity in metre of the Middle Scots poets.
[2] sober. [3] condign. [4] acknowledged. [5] Without. [6] poor folk to great consequence. [7] without equal. [8] reign. [9] That sweet (sight) inclines all spirit (i. e., everybody) with both head and feet.
[10] advancement.
[11] avails. [12] loses. [13] in short. [14] counsel.
[15] shrivels. [16] shining one. [17] mean. [18] enmity.
[19] end. [20] causing (sense dubious). [21] Cause us pleasure, or pain. [22] to be succour. [23] reward.
[24] Be pleased quickly to make me quit of shame.
[25] In brief I put myself in thy control.

SIR DAVID LYNDESAY

THE DREAM (ll. 918–1036)

COMPLAYNT OF THE COMMOUNWEILL OF SCOTLAND [1]

And thus as we wer talking, to and fro,
We saw a bousteous berne [2] cum ouir the bent,[3]
Bot [4] hors, ou fute, als fast as he mycht go,
Quhose rayment wes all raggit, revin, and rent,
With visage leyne, as he had fastit Lent:
And fordwart fast his wayis he did advance,
With ane rycht melancolious countynance,

With scrip on hip, and pyikstaff in his hand,
As he had purposit to passe fra hame.
Quod I, 'Gude-man, I wald faine understand,
Geve that ye plesit, to wyt quhat were your name?'
Quod he, 'My Sonne, of that I think gret schame,
Bot, sen thow wald of my name have ane feill,[5]
Forsuith, thay call me John the Commounweill.'

'Schir Commounweill, quho hes yow so disgysit?'
Quod I: 'or quhat makis yow so miserbyll?
I have marvell to se yow so supprysit,[6]
The quhilk that I have sene so honorabyll.
To all the warld ye have bene profitabyll,
And weill honourit in everilk natioun:
How happinnis now your tribulatioun?'

'Allace!' quod he, 'thow seis how it dois stand
With me, and quhow I am disherisit [7]
Of all my grace, and mon pass of [8] Scotland,
And go, afore quhare I was cherisit.
Remane I heir, I am bot perysit;
For thare is few to me that takis tent,[9]
That garris [10] me go so raggit, revin, and rent:

'My tender friendis are all put to the flycht;
For policye is fled agane in France.[11]
My syster, Justice, almaist haith tynt [12] hir sycht,
That scho can nocht hald evinly the ballance.
Plane Wrang is plane capitane of ordinance,
The quihilk debarris laute [13] and reasoun;
And small remeid is found for open treasoun.

'In-to the South, allace! I was neir slane;
Ouer all the land I culd fynd no releif.
Almoist betuix the Mers and Lowmabane [14]
I culde nocht knaw ane leill man be ane theif.
To schaw thair reif,[15] thift, murthour, and mischeif,
And vicious workis, it wald infect the air,
And als langsum to me for tyll declair.

'In-to the Hieland I could fynd no remeid,
Bot suddantlie I wes put to exile:
Thai sweir swyngeoris [16] thay tuke of me non heid,
Nor amangs thame lat me remane ane quhyle.
Als, in the Oute Ylis, and in Argyle,
Unthrift, sweirnes, falset, povertie, and stryfe
Pat Policye in dainger of hir lyfe.

[1] This is near the end of the poem, and follows a description of Scotland by the dreamer's guide, Dame Remembrance. [2] rough fellow. [3] field. [4] Without. [5] knowledge. [6] oppressed. [7] disinherited. [8] must pass out of. [9] heed. [10] makes. [11] An allusion to the defeat of the French party. [12] lost. [13] loyalty. [14] i.e., in the whole Lowland. [15] robbery. [16] Those lazy rogues.

'In the Lawland I come to seik refuge,
And purposit thare to mak my residence;
Bot singulare profeit[1] gart me soune disluge,
And did me gret injuries and offence,
And said to me, "Swyith, harlote,[2] hy thee hence,
And in this countre see thow tak no curis,[5]
So lang as my auctoritie induris."

'And now I may mak no langer debait;
Nor I wate nocht quhome to I suld me mene;[4]
For I have socht throw all the Spirituall stait,
Quhilkis tuke na compt for to heir me complene.
Thair officiaris, thay held me at disdene;
For Symonie, he rewlis up all that rowte;
And Covatyce, that carle, gart[5] bar me oute.

'Pryde haith chaist far frome thame Humilitie;
Devotioun is fled unto the Freris;
Sensuale plesour hes baneist Chaistitie;
Lordis of religioun, thay go lyke seculeris,
Taking more compt in tellyng thair deneris[6]
Nor thai do of thair constitutioun.
Thus are thay blyndit be ambitioun.

'Our gentyll men are all degenerat;
Liberalitie and lawte boith ar lost,
And Cowardyce with lordis is laureat,
And knychtlie Curage turnit in brag and boast.
The civele weir misgydis everilk oist;[7]
Thare is nocht ellis bot ilk man for hymself;
That garris me go, thus baneist lyke ane elf.

'Tharefor, adew: I may no langer tarye.'
'Fair weill,' quod I, 'and with sanct Jhone to borrow!'[8]
Bot, wyt ye weill, my hart was wounder sarye
Quhen Comounweill so sopit[9] was in sorrow.
'Yit efter the nycht cumis the glaid morrow;
Quharefor, I pray yow, schaw me in certane
Quhen that ye purpose for to cum agane.'

'That questioun, it sall be sone decydit,'
Quod he, 'thare sall na Scot have confortyng
Of me tyll that I see the countre gydit
Be wysedome of ane gude auld prudent Kyng,
Quhilk sall delyte him maist, abone[10] all thyng,
To put Justice tyll executioun,
And on strang traitouris mak punitioun.

'Als yit to thee I say ane uther thyng:
I see rycht weill that proverbe is full trew,
"Wo to the realme that hes ouer young ane King!"'
With that he turnit his bak, and said adew.
Ouer firth and fell[11] rycht fast fra me he flew,
Quhose departyng to me was displesand.
With that, Remembrance tuk me be the hand,

And sone, me-thocht, scho brocht me to the roche
And to the cove[12] quhare I began to sleip.
With that, one schip did spedalye approche,
Full plesandlie saling apone the deip,
And syne[13] did slake hir salis and gan to creip
Towart the land, anent[14] quhare that I lay.
Bot, wyt ye weill, I gat ane fellown fray:[15]

All hir cannounis sche leit craik of at onis:
Down schuke the stremaris frome the topcastell;
Thay sparit nocht the poulder nor the stonis;[16]
Thay schot thair boltis, and doun thair ankeris fell;
The marenaris, thay did so youte[17] and yell,
That haistalie I stert out of my dreme,
Half in ane fray,[18] and spedalie past hame.

And lychtlie dynit, with lyste[19] and appetyte,
Syne efter past in-tyll ane oratore,

[1] individual interest. [2] In haste, fellow. [3] offices. [4] complain, moan. [5] caused to. [6] money. [7] host. [8] for your surety. [9] steeped. [10] above. [11] wood and hill. [12] cavern. [13] presently. [14] near. [15] a wicked fright. [16] stone bullets. [17] shout. [18] fright. [19] pleasure.

And tuke my pen, and thare began to wryte
All the visioun that I have schawin afore.
Schir, of my dreme as now thou gettis no more,
Bot I beseik God for to send thee grace
To rewle thy realme in unitie and peace.

THE TESTAMENT AND COMPLAINT OF OUR SOVEREIGN LORD'S PAPINGO

(ll. 626–1190)

ADEW, Edinburgh! thou heych tryumphant toun,
Within quhose boundis rycht blythfull have I bene,
Of trew merchandis the rute of this regioun,
Most reddy to resave Court, King, and Quene!
Thy polecye and justice may be sene.
War devotioun, wysedome, and honestie,
And credence tynt,[1] thay mycht be found in thee.

Adew, fair Snawdoun![2] with thy touris hie,
Thy Chapell Royall, park, and tabyll rounde![3]
May, June, and July walde I dwell in thee,
War I one man, to heir the birdis sounde,
Quhilk doith agane thy royall roche redounde.
Adew, Lythquo![4] quhose Palyce of plesance
Mycht be one patrone[5] in Portingall or France!

Fair-weill, Falkland! the fortrace of Fyfe,
Thy polyte park, under the Lowmound Law!
Sum-tyme in thee I led ane lustye lyfe,
The fallow deir, to see thame raik on raw.[6]
Court men to cum to thee, thay stand gret awe,
Sayand thy burgh bene of all burrowis baill,[7]
Because in thee thay never gat gude aill.

1 lost. 2 An old name of Stirling.
3 An ancient earthwork. 4 Linlithgow.
5 pattern. 6 range in row. 7 the worst.

THE COMMONYNG BETUIX THE PAPYNGO AND HIR HOLYE EXECUTOURIS[8]

The Pye persavit the Papyngo in paine,
He lychtit doun, and fenyeit him to greit:[9]
'Sister,' said he, 'alace! quho hes yow slane?
I pray yow, mak provisione for your spreit,
Dispone your geir,[10] and yow confes compleit.
I have power, be your contritioun,
Of all your mys[11] to geve yow full remissioun.

'I am,' said he, 'one Channoun regulare,
And of my brether Pryour principall:
My quhyte rocket my clene lyfe doith declare;
The blak bene[12] of the deith memoriall:
Quharefor I thynk your gudis naturall
Sulde be submyttit hole into my cure;
Ye know I am ane holye creature.'

The Ravin come rolpand,[13] quhen he hard the rair;[14]
So did the Gled,[15] with mony pieteous pew;[16]
And fenyeitlye thay contrafait gret cair.
'Sister,' said thay, 'your raklesnes we rew;
Now best it is our juste counsall ensew,
Sen we pretend to heych promotioun,
Religious men, of gret devotioun.'

'I am ane blak Monk,' said the rutlande[17] Ravin;
So said the Gled, 'I am ane holy freir,
And hes power to bryng yow quyke to hevin.
It is weill knawin my conscience bene full cleir;
The blak Bybill[18] pronunce I sall perqueir,[19]
So tyll our brether ye will geve sum gude;
God wat geve[20] we hes neid of lyves fude!'

The Papyngo said, 'Father, be the Rude,
Howbeit your rayment be religious lyke,

8 executors. 9 weep. 10 Dispose of your goods.
11 sins. 12 are. 13 croaking. 14 rumpus. 15 Kite.
16 thin cry. 17 croaking. 18 The prayer for the dead.
19 by heart, *par cœur*. 20 if.

Your conscience, I suspect, be nocht gude.
I did persave quhen prevelye ye did pyke [1]
Ane chekin from ane hen under ane dyke.'
'I grant,' said he. 'That hen was my gude freind,
And I that chekin tuke bot for my teind.[2]

'Ye knaw the faith be us mon be susteind:
So be the Pope it is preordinate
That spirituall men suld leve upon thair teind:
Bot weill wat I ye bene predestinate
In your extremis to be so fortunate,
To have sic holy consultatioun;
Quharefore we mak yow exhortatioun:

'Sen dame Nature hes grantit yow sic grace,
Layser to mak confessioun generall,
Schaw furth your syn in haist, quhil ye haif space;
Syne of your geir mak one memoriall.
We thre sal mak your feistis funerall,
And with gret blys bury we sall your bonis,
Syne trentalls twenty trattyll [3] all at onis.

'The roukis sall rair, that men sall on thame rew,
And crye *Commemoratio Animarum.*
We sall gar cheknis cheip, and geaslyngis pew,[4]
Suppose the geis and hennis suld crye alarum:
And we sall serve *secundum usum Sarum,*
And mak you saif: we fynd Sanct Blase to borgh,[5]
Cryand for yow the cairfull corrynogh.[6]

'And we sall syng about your sepulture
Sanct Mongois [7] matynis and the mekle creid,
And syne devotely saye, I yow assure,
The auld Placebo bakwart, and the beid; [8]
And we sall weir for yow the murnyng weid
And, thocht your spreit with Pluto war profest,
Devotelie sall your diregie [9] be addrest.'

1 steal. 2 tithe.
3 rattle off twenty services of thirty masses each.
4 make chickens chirp and goslings squeak.
5 as surety. 6 coronach, lament. 7 Mungo's (i.e., Kentigern's). 8 prayer. 9 funeral service.

'Father,' said scho, 'your facunde [10] wordis fair,
Full sore I dreid be contrar to your dedis.
The wyffis of the village cryis with cair
Quhen thai persave your mowe [11] ouirthort thar medis;
Your fals consait boith duke and draik [12] sore dreidis,
I marvell, suithlie,[13] ye be nocht eschamit
For your defaltis, beyng so defamit.

'It dois abhor my pure perturbit spreit
Tyll mak to yow ony confessioun.
I heir men saye ye bene one ypocrite,
Exemptit frome the Senye [14] and the Sessioun.
To put my geir in your possessioun,
That wyll I nocht, so help me Dame Nature!
Nor of my corps I wyll yow geve no cure.

'Bot, had I heir the nobyll Nychtingall,
The gentyll Ja, the Merle, and Turtur trew,
My obsequeis and feistis funerall
Ordour thay wald, with notis of the new.
The plesand Pown,[15] most angellyke of hew,
Wald God I wer this daye with hym confest,
And my devyse [16] dewlie be hym addrest!

'The myrthfull Maveis, with the gay Goldspink,
The lustye Larke, wald God thay war present!
My infortune, forsuith, thay wald forthink,[17]
And comforte me that bene so impotent.
The swyft Swallow, in prattick [18] moste prudent,
I wate scho wald my bledyng stem belyve [19]
With hir moste verteous stone restringityve.' [20]

'Compt [21] me the cace, under confessioun,'
The Gled said proudlye to the Papingo,
'And we sall sweir, be our professioun,
Counsall to keip, and schaw it to no mo.
We thee beseik, or thou depart us fro,
Declare to us sum causis reasonabyll
Quhy we bene haldin so abhominabyll.

10 eloquent. 11 ugly mug. 12 duck and drake.
13 forsooth. 14 Consistory court. 15 peacock.
16 testament. 17 regret. 18 practice, e.g., house building. 19 forthwith. 20 styptic. 21 give account of.

'Be thy travell thou hes experience,
First, beand bred in-to the Orient,
Syne be thy gude servyce and delygence
To prencis maid heir in the Occident.
Thow knawis the vulgare pepyllis jugement
Quhare thou transcurrit[1] the hote Meridionall,
Syne nyxt the Poill the plaige[2] Septentrionall.

'So, be thyne heych ingyne[3] superlatyve,
Of all countreis thou knawis the qualiteis:
Quharefore, I thee conjure, be God of lyve,
The veritie declare, withouttin leis,[4]
Quhat thou hes hard, be landis or be seis,
Of us kirkmen, boith gude and evyll reporte;
And quhow thay juge, schaw us, we thee exhorte.'

'Father,' said scho, 'I, catyve creature,
Dar nocht presume with sic mater to mell.[5]
Of your caces, ye knaw, I have no cure;
Demand thame quhilk in prudence doith precell.[6]
I maye nocht pew,[7] my panes bene so fell:
And als, perchance, ye wyll nocht stand content
To knaw the vulgare pepyllis jugement.

'Yit, wyll the deith alyte[8] withdrawe his darte,
All that lyis in my memoryall
I sall declare with trew unfenyeit hart.
And first I saye to you in generall
The commoun peple sayith ye bene all
Degenerit frome your holy pirmityvis,[9]
As testyfeis the proces of your lyvis.

'Of your peirles prudent predecessouris
The beginnyng, I grant, wes verray gude:
Apostolis, martyres, virgines, confessouris,
The sound of thair excellent sanctitude
Was hard ouer all the warld, be land and flude,
Plantyng the faith, be predicatioun,
As Christe had maid to thame narratioun.

'To fortyfie the faith thay tuke no feir
Afore prencis, preching full prudentlie;
Of dolorous deith thay doutit nocht the deir,[10]
The veritie declaryng ferventlie;
And martyrdome thay sufferit pacientlie:
Thay tuke no cure of land, ryches, nor rent;
Doctryne and deid war boith equivolent.

'To schaw at lenth thair workis wer gret wunder,
Thair myracklis thay wer so manifest.
In name of Christe thay hailit mony hounder,[11]
Rasyng the dede, and purgeing the possest,
With perverst spreitis quhilkis had bene opprest.
The crukit ran, the blynd men gat thair ene,
The deiff men hard, the lypper[12] war maid clene.

'The prelatis spousit wer with Povertie,
Those dayis, quhen so thay flurisit in fame,
And with hir generit[13] lady Chaistitie
And dame Devotioun, notabyll of name.
Humyll thay wer, simpyll, and full of schame.
Thus Chaistitie and dame Devotioun
Wer principall cause of thair promotioun.

'Thus thay contynewit in this lyfe devyne
Aye tyll thare rang,[14] in Romes gret cietie,
Ane potent prince was namit Constantyne,
Persavit the Kirk had spowsit Povertie.
With gude intent, and movit of pietie,
Cause of divorce he fande betuix thame two,
And partit thame, withouttin wordis mo.

'Syne, schortlie, with ane gret solempnitie,
Withouttin ony dispensatioun,
The Kirk he spowsit with dame Propirtie,
Quhilk haistelye, be proclamatioun,
To Povertie gart[15] mak narratioun,
Under the pane of peirsyng of hir eine,[16]
That with the Kirk scho sulde no more be seine.

1 passed. 2 region. 3 intelligence. 4 lies.
5 meddle. 6 excel. 7 speak. 8 a little.
9 primitives, the fathers of the church.
10 injury. 11 healed many hundreds. 12 lepers.
13 begat. 14 reigned. 15 he caused.
16 Upon pain of putting out her eyes.

'Sanct Sylvester that tyme rang Pope in Rome,
Quhilk first consentit to the mariage
Of Propirtie,[1] the quhilk began to blome,
Taking on hir the cure with heych corrage.
Devotioun drew hir tyll one heremytage
Quhen scho considerit lady Propirtie
So heych exaltit in-to dignitie.

'O Sylvester, quhare was thy discretioun?
Quhilk Peter did renounce, thow did resave.
Androw and Jhone did leif thair possessioun,
Thair schippis, and nettis, lynes, and all the lave;[2]
Of temporall substance no-thing wald thay have
Contrarious to thair contemplatioun,
Bot soberlye thair sustentatioun.

'Johne the Baptist went to the wyldernes.
Lazarus, Martha, and Marie Magdalene
Left heretage and guddis, more and les.
Prudent Sanct Paule thocht Propertie prophane;
Frome toun to toun he ran, in wynde and rane,
Upon his feit, techeing the word of grace,
And never was subjectit to ryches.'

The Gled said, 'Yit I heir no-thyng bot gude.
Proceid schortlye, and thy mater avance.'
The Papyngo said, 'Father, be the Rude,
It wer too lang to schaw the circumstance,
Quhow Propertie, with hir new alyance,
Grew gret with chylde, as trew men to me talde,
And bure two dochteris gudelie to behalde.

'The eldest dochter named was Ryches,
The secunde syster, Sensualytie;
Quhilks did incres, within one schorte proces,
Preplesande[3] to the Spiritualytie.
In gret substance and excellent bewtie
Thir Ladyis two grew so, within few yeiris,
That in the warlde wer non mycht be thair peiris.

'This royall Ryches and lady Sensuall
Frome that tyme furth tuke hole the governance
Of the moste part of the Stait Spirituall:
And thay agane, with humbyll observance,
Amorouslie thair wyttis did avance,
As trew luffaris, thair ladyis for to pleis.
God wate geve[4] than thair hartis war at eis.

'Soune thay foryet to study, praye, and preche,
Thay grew so subject to dame Sensuall,
And thocht bot paine pure pepyll for to teche;
Yit thay decretit, in thair gret Counsall,
Thay wald no more to mariage be thrall,
Traistyng surely tyll observe Chaistitie,
And all begylit, quod[5] Sensualytie.

'Apperandlye thay did expell thair wyffis
That thay mycht leif at large, without thirlage,[6]
At libertie to lede thair lustie lyffis,
Thynkand men thrall that bene in mariage.
For new faces provokis new corrage.
Thus Chaistitie thay turne in-to delyte;
Wantyng of wyffis bene cause of appetyte.

'Dame Chaistitie did steill away for schame,
Frome tyme scho did persave thair proviance.[7]
Dame Sensuall one letter gart proclame,
And hir exilit Italy and France.
In Inglande couthe scho get none ordinance.[8]
Than to the kyng and courte of Scotlande
Scho markit hir,[9] withouttin more demande.

'Traistyng in-to that court to get conforte,
Scho maid hir humyll supplycatioun.
Schortlye thay said scho sulde get na supporte,
Bot bostit hir,[10] with blasphematioun,
"To preistis go mak your protestatioun.
It is," said thay, "mony one houndreth yeir
Sen Chaistitie had ony entres[11] heir."

'Tyrit for travell, scho to the preistis past,
And to the rewlaris of religioun.

[1] Under Silvester (4th century) the Church first acquired much property.
[2] rest. [3] Very pleasing. [4] knows if. [5] quoth, said. [6] bondage. [7] purveyance, conduct. [8] settlement. [9] She marched. [10] ordered her. [11] entry.

Of hir presens schortlye thay war agast,
Sayand thay thocht it bot abusioun
Hir to resave: so, with conclusion,
With one avyce decretit and gave dome,
Thay walde resset[1] no rebell out of Rome.

'"Sulde we resave that Romanis hes refusit,
And baneist Inglande, Italye, and France,
For your flattrye, than wer we weill abusit.
Passe hyne,"[2] said thay, "and fast your way avance,
Amang the nonnis go seik your ordinance;
For we have maid aith of fidelytie
To dame Ryches and Sensualytie."

'Than paciently scho maid progressioun
Towarde the nonnis, with hart syching full sore.
Thay gaif hir presens, with processioun,
Ressavand hir with honour, laud, and glore,
Purposyng to preserve hir ever more.
Of that novellis[3] come to dame Propertié,
To Ryches, and to Sensualytie;

'Quhilkis sped thame at the post rycht spedalye,
And sett ane seage proudlye about the place.
The sillye nonnis did yeild thame haistelye,
And humyllye of that gylt askit grace,
Syne gave thair bandis of perpetuall peace.
Ressavand thame, thay kest up wykkets[4] wyde:
Than Chaistytie walde no langer abyde.

'So for refuge, fast to the freris scho fled;
Quhilks said thay wald of ladyis tak no cure.'
'Quhare bene scho now?' than said the gredy Gled.
'Nocht amang yow,' said scho, 'I yow assure.
I traist scho bene upon the Borrow-mure
Besouth[5] Edinburgh, and that rycht mony menis,[6]
Profest amang the Systeris of the Schenis.[7]

'Thare hes scho found hir mother Povertie,
And Devotioun, hir awin syster carnall.
Thare hes scho found Faith, Hope, and Charitie,
Togidder with the Vertues Cardinall.
Thare hes scho found ane convent yit unthrall
To dame Sensuall, nor with riches abusit;
So quietlye those ladyis bene inclusit.'

The Pyote said, 'I dreid, be thay assail-yeit,
Thay rander thame, as did the holy nonnis.'
'Doute nocht,' said scho, 'for thay bene so artalyeit,[8]
Thay purpose to defend thame with thair gunnis.
Reddy to schute thay have sax gret cannounnis.
Perseverance, Constancye, and Conscience,
Austerytie, Laubour, and Abstynance.

'To resyste subtell Sensualytie
Strongly thay bene enarmit, feit and handis,
Be Abstynence, and keipith Povertie,
Contrar Ryches and all hir fals servandis.
Thay have ane boumbard braissit up in bandis[9]
To keip thair porte, in myddis of thair clois,
Quhilk is callit, *Domine custodi nos;*

'Within quhose schote thare dar no enemeis
Approche thair place, for dreid of dyntis doure.[10]
Boith nycht and daye thay wyrk, lyke besye beis,
For thair defence reddye to stande in stoure,[11]
And hes sic watcheis on thair utter toure
That dame Sensuall with seage dar not assailye,
Nor cum within the schote of thair artailye.'[12]

The Pyote said, 'Quhareto sulde thay presume
For to resyste sweit Sensualytie,
Or dame Ryches, quhilkis reularis bene in Rome?
Ar thay more constant, in thair qualytie,
Nor the prencis of Spiritualytie,

1 receive. 2 hence. 3 news.
4 doors. 5 South of. 6 lament.
7 Sisters in a Dominican nunnery dedicated to St. Catherine of Sienna, on the Burrow-muir of Edinburgh.
8 provided with artillery. 9 a hooped mortar.
10 hard blows. 11 shock of battle. 12 artillery.

Quhilkis plesandlye, withouttin obstakle,
Haith thame resavit in their habitakle?[1]

'Quhow long, traist ye, those ladyis sall remane
So solytar, in sic perfectioun?'
The Papingo said, 'Brother, in certane,
So lang as thay obey correctioun,
Cheisyng thair heddis be electioun,
Unthrall to Ryches or to Povertie,[2]
Bot as requyrith thair necessitie.

'O prudent prelatis, quhare was your presciance,
That tuke on hand tyll observe Chaistitie,
But[3] austeir lyfe, laubour, and abstenance?
Persavit ye nocht the gret prosperitie
Apperandlye to cum of Propertie?
Ye knaw gret cheir, great eais, and ydelnes
To Lychorie was mother and maistres.'

'Thow ravis unrockit,'[4] the Ravin said, 'be the Rude,
So to reprove Ryches or Propertie.
Abraham, and Ysaac war ryche, and verray gude;
Jacobe and Josephe had prosperitie.'
The Papingo said, 'That is verytie.
Ryches, I grant, is nocht to be refusit,
Providyng alwaye it be nocht abusit.'

Than laid the Ravin ane replycatioun,
Syne said, 'Thy reasone is nocht worth ane myte,
As I sall prove, with protestatioun
That no man tak my wordis in dispyte.
I saye, the temporall prencis hes the wyte,[5]
That in the Kirk sic pastours dois provyde
To governe saulis, that not tham-selfis can gyde.

'Lang tyme efter the Kirk tuke Propertie,
The prelatis levit in gret perfectioun,
Unthrall to Ryches or Sensualytie,
Under the Holy Spreitis protectioun,
Orderlye chosin be electioun,
As Gregore, Jerome, Ambrose, and Augustyne,
Benedict, Bernard, Clement, Cleit, and Lyne.[6]

'Sic pacient prelatis enterit be the porte,
Plesand the peple be predicatioun.
Now dyke-lowparis[7] dois in the Kirk resort,
Be symonie, and supplycatioun
Of prencis be thair presentatioun.
So sillye saulis, that bene Christis scheip,
Ar gevin to hungrye gormande[8] wolfis to keip.

'No marvell is thocht we religious men
Degenerit be, and in our lyfe confusit:
Bot sing, and drynk, none uther craft we ken;
Our spirituall fatheris hes us so abusit.
Agane our wyll those treukouris[9] bene intrusit.
Lawit[10] men hes now religious men in curis;
Profest virgenis in keipyng of strong huris.[11]

'Prencis, prencis, quhar bene your heych prudence
In dispositioun of your beneficeis?
The guerdonyng of your courticience[12]
Is sum cause of thir gret enormyteis.
Thare is one sorte wattand[13] lyke houngre fleis,[14]
For spirituall cure, thocht thay be no-thing abyll,
Quhose gredie thristis[15] bene insaciabyll.

'Prencis, I pray yow, be no more abusit,
To verteous men havyng so small regarde.
Quhy sulde vertew, throuch flattrye, be refusit,
That men for cunnyng[16] can get no rewarde?
Allace! that ever one braggar or ane barde,
Ane hure-maister, or commoun hasarture,[17]
Sulde in the Kirk get ony kynde of cure!

'War I one man worthy to weir ane croun,
Aye quhen thare vakit[18] ony beneficeis,
I suld gar call ane congregatioun,
The principall of all the prelaceis,
Moste cunnyng clerkis of universiteis,
Moste famous fatheris of religioun,
With thair advyse mak dispositioun.

'I suld dispone all offices pastorallis
Tyll doctouris of devynitie, or jure;[19]

[1] habitation. [2] Qy. Propertie (?) [3] Without. [4] recklessly. [5] blame.
[6] The first two popes after S. Peter.
[7] leapers over the wall. [8] greedy. [9] tricksters.
[10] Lewd, unlearned. [11] whores. [12] courtiers.
[13] waiting. [14] fleas. [15] thirsts. [16] skill, knowledge.
[17] gambler. [18] fell vacant. [19] law.

And cause dame Vertew pull up all hir saillis,
Quhen cunnyng men had in the Kirk moist cure;
Gar lordis send thair sonnes, I yow assure,
To seik science, and famous sculis frequent;
Syne thame promove that wer moste sapient.

'Gret plesour wer to heir ane byschope preche,
One deane, or doctour in divinitie,
One abbote quhilk could weill his convent teche,
One persoun[1] flowing in phylosophie.
I tyne[2] my tyme to wys[3] quhilk wyll nocht be.
War nocht[4] the preaching of the Begging Freris,
Tynt war the faith amang the seculeris.'

'As for thair precheing,' quod the Papingo,
'I thame excuse, for quhy, thay bene so thrall
To Propertie, and hir ding[5] dochteris two,
Dame Ryches, and fair lady Sensuall,
That may nocht use no pastyme spirituall;
And in thair habitis thay tak sic delyte
Thay have renuncit russat and raploch quhyte,[6]

'Cleikand[7] to thame skarlote and crammosie,[8]
With menever, martrik, grice, and ryche armyne.[9]
Thair lawe hartis exaultit ar so hie,
To see thair papale pompe it is ane pyne.[10]
More ryche arraye is now, with frenyeis[11] fyne,
Upon the bardyng[12] of ane byscheopis mule,
Nor ever had Paule or Peter agane Yule.

'Syne fair ladyis thair chene may not eschape,
Dame Sensuall sic seid haith in tham sawin,
Les skaith[13] it war, with lycence of the Pape,
That ilke prelate one wyfe had of his awin,
Nor se thair bastardis ouirthort the countre blawin;[14]
For now, be thay be weill cumin frome the sculis,
Thay fall to work as thay war commoun bullis.'

'Pew!'[15] quod the Gled, 'thow prechis all in vaine:
Ye seculare floks hes of our cace no curis.'[16]
'I grant,' said scho; 'yit men wyll speik agane,
Quhow ye haif maid a hundreth thousand huris
Quhilkis nevir had bene war not your lychorous luris.
And geve I lee,[17] hartlye I me repent;
Was never bird, I watt, more penitent.'

Than scho hir shrave,[18] with devote contynance,
To that fals Gled quhilk fenyeit hym one freir;
And quhen scho had fulfyllit hir pennance,
Full subtellye at hir he gan inqueir:
'Cheis yow,' said he, 'quhilk of us brether heir
Sall have of all your naturall geir the curis.
Ye knaw none bene more holye creaturis.'

'I am content,' quod the pure Papingo,
'That ye frier Gled, and Corby Monk, your brother,
Have cure of all my guddis, and no mo,
Sen at this tyme freindschip I fynd non uther.'
'We salbe to yow trew, as tyll our mother,'
Quod thay, and sweir tyll fulfyll hir intent.
'Of that,' said scho, 'I tak ane instrument.'

The Pyote said, 'Quhat sall myne office bee?'
'Ouirman,'[19] said scho, 'unto the tother two.'

[1] parson. [2] lose. [3] wish. [4] If it had not been for. [5] digne, worthy. [6] homespun white. [7] Taking. [8] crimson. [9] miniver, marten, grey, and rich ermine. [10] pain. [11] fringes. [12] caparison. [13] harm. [14] blown all over the country. [15] Pshaw. [16] Our condition is no affair of you secular flocks (or, more probably, *folks*). [17] if I lie. [18] confessed. [19] Overseer, umpire.

The rowpand Revin said, 'Sweit syster, lat see
Your holy intent; for it is tyme to go.'
The gredie Gled said, 'Brother, do nocht so;
We wyll remane, and haldin up hir hede,
And never depart from hir till scho be dede.'

The Papingo thame thankit tenderlye,
And said, 'Sen ye have tane on yow this cure,
Depart myne naturall guddis equalye,
That ever I had or hes of dame Nature,
First, to the Howlet,[1] indigent and pure,
Quhilk on the daye, for schame, dar nocht be sene;
Tyll hir I laif my gaye galbarte[2] of grene.

'My brycht depurit ene,[3] as christall cleir,
Unto the Bak[4] ye sall thame boith present;
In Phebus presens quhilk dar nocht appeir,
Of naturall sycht scho bene so impotent.
My birneist[5] beik I laif, with gude entent,
Unto the gentyll, pieteous Pellicane,
To helpe to peirs hir tender hart in twane.

'I laif the Goik,[6] quhilk hes no sang bot one,
My musyke, with my voce angelycall;
And to the Guse ye geve, quhen I am gone,
My eloquence and toung rhetoricall.
And tak and drye my bonis, gret and small,
Syne close thame in one cais of ebure[7] fyne,
And thame present onto the Phenix syne,

'To birne with hir quhen scho hir lyfe renewis.
In Arabye ye sall hir fynde but weir,[8]
And sall knaw hir be hir moste hevinly hewis,
Gold, asure, gowles,[9] purpour, and synopeir.[10]
Hir dait[11] is for to leif fyve houndreth yeir.
Mak to that bird my commendatioun.
And als, I mak yow supplycatioun,

'Sen of my corps I have yow gevin the cure,
Ye speid yow to the court, but tareyng,
And tak my hart, of perfyte portrature,
And it present unto my Soverane Kyng:
I wat he wyll it clois in-to one ryng.
Commende me to his Grace, I yow exhorte,
And of my passion mak hym trew reporte.

'Ye thre my trypes sall have, for your travell,[12]
With luffer and lowng,[13] to part equale amang yow;
Prayand Pluto, the potent prince of hell,
Geve ye failye, that in his feit he fang[14] yow.
Be to me trew, thocht I no-thyng belang yow.
Sore I suspect your conscience be too large.'
'Doute nocht,' said they, 'we tak it with the charge.'

'Adew, brether!' quod the pure Papingo;
'To talking more I have no time to tarye;
Bot, sen my spreit mon fra my body go,
I recommend it to the Quene of Farye,
Eternallye in-tyll hir court to carye,
In wyldernes among the holtis hore.'[15]
Than scho inclynit hir hed, and spak no more.

Plungit in-tyll hir mortall passioun,
Full grevouslie scho gryppit to the ground.
It war too lang to mak narratioun
Of sychis sore, with mony stang and stound.[16]
Out of hir wound the blude did so abound,
One compas round was with hir blude maid reid:
Without remeid,[17] thare wes no-thyng bot dede.[18]

And be[19] scho had *In Manus tuas* said,
Extinctit wer hir naturall wyttis fyve;
Hir heid full softlye on hir schulder laid,
Syne yeild the spreit, with panes pungityve.[20]
The Ravin began rudely to rug and ryve,
Full gormondlyke,[21] his emptie throte to feid.
'Eit softlye, brother,' said the gredy Gled:

[1] owl. [2] mantle. [3] eyes. [4] bat. [5] burnished. [6] cuckoo. [7] ivory. [8] without doubt. [9] red. [10] green. [11] date, term of life.

[12] travail, work. [13] liver and lung. [14] seize. [15] gray wooded hills. [16] sting and pang. [17] remedy. [18] death. [19] by the time that. [20] keen. [21] gluttonlike.

'Quhill scho is hote, depart hir evin amang us.
Tak thow one half, and reik[1] to me aneuther.
In-tyll our rycht, I wat, no wycht dar wrang us.'
The Pyote said, 'The feind resave the fouther![2]
Quhy mak ye me stepbarne, and I your brother?
Ye do me wrang, schir Gled, I schrew[3] your harte.'
'Tak thare,' said he, 'the puddyngis[4] for thy parte.'

Than, wyt ye weill, my hart wes wounder sair
For to behalde that dolent departyng,[5]
Hir angell fedderis fleying in the air.
Except the hart, was left of hir no-thing.
The Pyote said, 'This pertenith to the Kyng,
Quhilk tyll his Grace I purpose to present.'
'Thow,' quod the Gled, 'sall faill of thyne entent.'

The Revin said, 'God! nor I rax in ane raipe,
And[6] thow get this tyll outher kyng or duke!'
The Pyote said, 'Plene I nocht[7] to the Pape
Than in ane smedie[8] I be smorit[9] with smuke.'
With that the Gled the pece claucht in his cluke,[10]
And fled his way: the lave, with all thair mycht,
To chace the Gled, flew all out of my sycht.

Now have ye hard this lytill tragedie,
The sore complent, the testament, and myschance
Of this pure bird quhilk did ascend so hie.
Beseikand yow excuse myne ignorance
And rude indyte,[11] quhilk is nocht tyll avance.
And to the quair,[12] I geve commandiment,
Mak no repair quhair poetis bene present.

[1] reach. [2] the lot. [3] beshrew. [4] entrails. [5] doleful dividing. [6] May I stretch on a rope, i.e., hang, if, etc. [7] If I do not complain. [8] smithy. [9] smothered. [10] clutched in his claw. [11] style. [12] quire, book.

Because thow bene
But Rethorike, so rude,
Be never sene
Besyde none other buke,
With Kyng, nor Quene,
With lord, nor man of gude.
With coit[13] unclene,
Clame kynrent[14] to sum cuke;
Steil in ane nuke[15]
Quhen thay lyste on thee luke.
For smell of smuke
Men wyll abhor to beir thee.
Heir I manesweir[16] thee;
Quhairfor, to lurke go leir[17] thee.

KITTY'S CONFESSION

THE CURATE AND KITTY

THE Curate Kittie culd confesse,
And scho tald on baith mair and lesse.
Quhen scho was telland as scho wist,[18]
The Curate Kittie wald have kist;
Bot yit ane countenance he bure
Degeist,[19] devote, daine,[20] and demure;
And syne began hir to exempne.[21]
He wes best at the efter game.
Quod he, 'Have ye na wrangous geir?'[22]
Quod scho, 'I staw[23] ane pek of beir.'[24]
Quod he, 'That suld restorit be,
Tharefor delyver it to me.
Tibbie and Peter bad me speir[25];
Be my conscience, thay sall it heir.'
Quod he, 'Leve ye in lecherie?'
Quod scho, 'Will Leno mowit[26] me.'
Quod he, 'His wyfe that sall I tell,
To mak hir acquentance with my-sell.'
Quod he, 'Ken ye na heresie?'
'I wait nocht quhat that is,' quod sche.
Quod he, 'Hard ye na Inglis bukis?'[27]
Quod scho, 'My maister on thame lukis.'
Quod he, 'The bischop that sall knaw,
For I am sworne that for to schaw.'
Quod he, 'What said he of the King?'
Quod scho, 'Of gude he spak na-thing.'
Quod he, 'His Grace of that sall wit;
And he sall lose his lyfe for it.'
Quhen scho in mynd did mair revolve,
Quod he, 'I can nocht you absolve,
Bot to my chalmer cum at even
Absolvit for to be and schrevin.'

[13] coat. [14] kindred. [15] nook. [16] forswear. [17] learn. [18] as best she knew. [19] Grave. [20] modest. [21] examine. [22] illicit possessions. [23] stole. [24] barley. [25] ask. [26] toyed with. [27] Reformation writings, especially the Bible, printed in England.

Quod scho, 'I wyll pas tyll ane-uther.
And I met with Schir Andro, my brother,
And he full clenely did me schryve.
Bot he wes sumthing talkatyve;
He speirit[1] mony strange case,
How that my lufe did me inbrace,
Quhat day, how oft, quhat sort, and quhare?
Quod he, "I wald I had bene thare."
He me absolvit for ane plak,[2]
Thocht[3] he na pryce with me wald mak;
And mekil Latyne he did mummill,
I hard na-thing bot hummill bummill.
He schew me nocht of Goddis word,
Quhilk scharper is than ony sword,
And deip intill our hart dois prent
Our syn, quharethrow we do repent.
He pat me na-thing into feir,
Quharethrow I suld my syn forbeir;
He schew me nocht the maledictioun
Of God for syn, nor the afflictioun
And in this lyfe the greit mischeif
Ordanit to punische hure and theif;
Nor schew he me of hellis pane,
That I mycht feir, and vice refraine;
He counsalit me nocht till abstene,
And leid ane holy lyfe, and clene.
Of Christis blude na-thing he knew,
Nor of His promisses full trew,
That saifis all that wyll beleve,
That Sathan sall us never greve.
He teichit me nocht for till traist
The confort of the Haly Ghaist.
He bad me nocht to Christ be kynd,
To keip His law with hart and mynd,
And lufe and thank His greit mercie,
Fra syn and hell that savit me;
And lufe my nichtbour as my-sell.
Of this na-thing he culd me tell,
Bot gave me pennance, ilk ane day
Ane *Ave Marie* for to say,
And Fridayis fyve na fische to eit,
(Bot butter and eggis ar better meit),
And with ane plak to buy ane messe
Fra drounkin Schir Jhone Latynelesse.
Quod he, "Ane plak I wyll gar Sandie
Give thee agane, with handie dandie."[4]
Syne[5] into pilgrimage to pas —
The verray way to wantounes.
Of all his pennance I was glaid,
I had them all perqueir,[6] I said.
To mow and steill I ken the pryce,
I sall it set on cincq and syce.[7]

Bot he my counsale culd nocht keip;
He maid him be the fyre to sleip,
Syne cryit, "Colleris,[8] beif and coillis,[9]
Hcis, and schone with dowbill soillis,
Caikis and candill, creische[10] and salt,
Curnis[11] of meill, and luiffillis[12] of malt,
Wollin and linning, werp and woft —
Dame! keip the keis of your woll loft!"
Throw drink and sleip maid him to raif;
And swa with us thay play the knaif.'

Freiris sweiris be thair professioun
Nane can be saif but[13] this Confessioun,
And garris all men understand
That it is Goddis awin command.
Yit it is nocht but mennis drame,
The pepill to confound and schame.
It is nocht ellis but mennis law,
Maid mennis mindis for to knaw,
Quharethrow thay syle[14] thame as thay will,
And makis thair law conforme tharetill,
Sittand in mennis conscience
Abone Goddis magnificence;
And dois the pepill teche and tyste[15]
To serve the Pape the Antechriste.
To the greit God Omnipotent
Confess thy syn, and sore repent;
And traist in Christ, as wrytis Paule,
Quhilk sched his blude to saif thy saule;
For nane can thee absolve bot He,
Nor tak away thy syn frome thee.
Gif of gude counsall thow hes neid,
Or hes nocht leirnit weill thy Creid,
Or wickit vicis regne in thee,
The quhilk thow can nocht mortifie,
Or be in desperatioun,
And wald have consolatioun,
Than till ane preichour trew thow pas,
And schaw thy syn and thy trespas.
Thow neidis nocht to schaw him all,
Nor tell thy syn baith greit and small,
Quhilk is unpossible to be;
Bot schaw the vice that troubillis thee,
And he sall of thy saule have reuth,
And thee instruct in-to the treuth,
And with the Word of Veritie
Sall confort and sall counsall thee,
The sacramentis schaw thee at lenth,
Thy lytle faith to stark and strenth,[16]
And how thow suld thame richtlie use,
And all hypocrisie refuse.

[1] asked about. [2] the third of a penny. [3] Though. [4] a child's guessing game. [5] Then. [6] by heart. [7] "five and six," dicing terms.

[8] Collars. [9] coals. [10] lard. [11] Grains. [12] handfuls. [13] without. [14] deceive. [15] decoy. [16] to increase and strengthen.

Confessioun first wes ordanit fre
In this sort in the Kirk to be.
Swa to confes as I descryve,[1]
Wes in the gude Kirk primityve;
Swa wes confessioun ordanit first,
Thocht Codrus[2] kyte[3] suld cleve and birst.

THE TESTAMENT OF SQUIRE MELDRUM

The holie man Iob, ground of pacience,
In his greit trubill trewlie did report, —
Quhilk I persave, now, be experience, —
That mennis lyfe, in eirth, bene[4] wounder short.
My youth is gane; and eild[5] now dois resort:
My time is gane; I think it bot ane dreame:
Yit efter deith remane sall my gude fame.

I persave shortlie that I man[6] pay my det:
To me in eirth no place bene permanent:
My hart on it no mair now will I set,
Bot, with the help of God omnipotent,
With resolute mind, go mak my Testament,
And tak my leif at cuntriemen and kyn,
And all the warld: and thus I will begyn.

Thrie Lordis to me sal be executouris, —
Lindesayis, all thrie, in surname of renoun:
Of my Testament thay sall have hail[7] the cure,[8]
To put my mind[9] till executioun.
That surname failyeit[10] never to the Croun;
Na mair will thay to me, I am richt sure,
Quhilk is the caus that I give them the cure.

First, David, Erll of Craufuird, wise and wicht;[11]
And Iohne, Lord Lindesay, my maister special.
The thrid sal be ane nobill travellit Knicht,
Quhilk knawis the coistis of feistis funeral:
The wise Sir Walter Lindesay they him cal,
Lord of St. Iohne, and Knicht of Torfichane,
Be sey and land ane vailyeand Capitane.

Thocht age hes maid my bodie impotent,
Yit in my hart hie courage doeth precell;[12]
Quhairfoir, I leif to God, with gude intent,
My spreit, the quhilk he hes maid immortell,
Intill his Court perpetuallie to dwell,
And nevir moir to steir[13] furth of that steid,
Till Christ discend and judge baith quick and deid.

I yow beseik, my Lordis Executouris,
My geir[14] geve till the nixt of my kynrent.[15]
It is weill kend,[16] I never tuik na cures
Of conquessing of riches nor of rent:
Dispone[17] as ye think maist expedient.
I never tuik cure of gold more than of glas.
Without honour, fy, fy vpon riches!

I yow requeist, my friendis, ane and all,
And nobill men, of quhome I am descendit,
Faill not to be at my feist funerall,
Quhilk throw the warld, I traist, sal be commendit.
Ye knaw how that my fame I have defendit,
During my life, unto this latter hour,
Quhilk suld to yow be infinit plesour.

First, of my bowellis clenge[18] my bodie clene,
Within and out; syne,[19] wesche it weill with wyne, —
Bot honestie[20] see that nothing be sene; —
Syne, clois it in ane coistlie carvit schryne
Of ceder treis, or of cyper fyne:
Anoynt my corps with balme delicious,
With cynamome, and spycis precious.

In twa caissis of gold and precious stanis
Inclois my hart and toung, richt craftelie:
My sepulture, sune, gar[21] mak for my banis,
Into the Tempill of Mars, triumphandlie,
Of marbill stanis carvit richt curiouslie,
Quhairin my kist[22] and banis ye sall clois,
In that triumphand Tempill to repois.

Mars, Venus, and Mercurius, all thre
Gave me my natural inclinatiounis,
Quhilk rang[23] the day of my nativitie;
And sa thair hevinlie constellatiounis
Did me support in monie natiounis.
Mars maid me hardie like ane feirs lyoun,
Quhairthrow I conqueist honour and renoun.

[1] describe. [2] A poet ridiculed by Virgil in the *Eclogues*. [3] belly. [4] is. [5] old age. [6] must. [7] wholly. [8] care. [9] intention. [10] failed. [11] brave, stout. [12] dominate. [13] stir. [14] property. [15] kindred. [16] known. [17] Dispose. [18] cleanse. [19] then. [20] Without honor. [21] cause. [22] coffin. [23] reigned.

Quho list to knaw the actis bellical,[1]
Let thame go reid the legend of my life;
Thair sall thai find the deidis martiall,
How I have stand, in monie stalwart strife,
Victoriouslie, with speir, sheild, sword, and knife:
Quhairfoir, to Mars, the God Armipotent,
My corps incloisit ye do till him present.

Mak offering of my toung rhetoricall
Till Mercurius, quhilk gaif me eloquence,
In his Tempill to hing perpetuall:
I can mak him na better recompence;
For, quhen I was brocht to the preseuce
Of Kings, in Scotland, Ingland, and in France,
My ornate toung my honour did avance.

To fresche Venus my hart ye sall present,
Quhilk hes to me bene, ay, comfortabill:
And in my face sic grace scho did imprent,
All creatures did think me amiabill.
Wemen to me scho maid sa favorabill,
Wes never ladie that luikit in my face,
Bot honestlie I did obtene hir grace.

. . . . . .

And, syne, hing vp, above my sepulture,
My bricht harnes, my scheild, and als my speir,
Togidder with my courtlie coit armour,
Quhilk I wes wont upon my bodie beir,
In France, in Ingland, being at the weir;[2]
My baner, basnet,[3] with my temperall,[4]
As bene the use of feistis funerall.

This beand[5] done, I pray yow tak the pane
My Epitaphe to writ, upon this wyis,
Abone my grave, in goldin letteris fyne:
'The maist invincibill weiriour heir lyis,
During his time quhilk wan sic laud and pryis,
That throw the hevinis sprang his nobil fame:
Victorious William Meldrum wes his name.'

Adew! my Lordis; I may na langer tarie:
My Lord Lindesay, adew! abone all uther.
I pray to God, and to the Virgine Marie,
With your Lady to leif lang in the Struther.
Maister Patrik, with young Normond, your brother,
With my Ladies, your sisteris, al, adew!
My departing, I wait weill, ye will rew.

[1] warlike. [2] war. [3] helmet. [4] coat-armor. [5] being.

Bot, maist of all, the fair Ladies of France,
Quhen thai heir tell, but dout, that I am deid,
Extreme dolour wil change thair countenance,
And, for my saik, will weir the murning weid.
Quhent hir novellis[6] dois into Ingland spreid,
Of Londoun, than, the lustie ladies cleir
Will, for my saik, mak dule and drerie cheir.

Of Craigfergus my dayis darling, adew!
In all Ireland of feminine the flour.
In your querrell twa men of weir I slew,
Quhilk purposit to do yow dishonour.
Ye suld have bene my spous and paramour,
With rent and riches for my recompence,
Quhilk I refusit, throw youth and insolence.

Fair weill! ye lemant[7] lampis of lustines
Of fair Scotland: adew! my Ladies all.
During my youth, with ardent besines,
Ye knaw how I was in your service thrall.
Ten thowsand times adew! above thame all,
Sterne[8] of Stratherne, my Ladie Soverane,
For quhom I sched my blud with mekill pane!

Yit, wald my Ladie luke, at evin and morrow,
On my Legend at lenth, scho wald not mis
How, for hir saik, I sufferit mekill sorrow.
Yit, give[9] I micht, at this time, get my wis,[10]
Of hir sweit mouth, deir God, I had ane kis.
I wis in vane: allace! we will dissever.
I say na mair: sweit hart adew for ever!

Brether in Armes, adew, in generall!
For me, I wait,[11] your hartis bene full soir.
All trew companyeounis, into speciall,
I say to yow, adew, for evermoir,
Till that we meit agane with God in Gloir!
Sir Curat, now gif me, incontinent,
My crysme,[12] with the holie Sacrament.

My Spreit hartlie I recommend
In manus tuas, Domine.
My hoip to the is till ascend,
Rex, quia redemisti me.
Fra syn resurrexisti me;
Or ellis my saull had bene forlorne:
With sapience docuisti me;
Blist be the hour that thow wes borne!

[6] these news. [7] flaming. [8] star. [9] if. [10] wish. [11] wot, know. [12] extreme unction.

BIOGRAPHICAL AND BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

BIOGRAPHICAL AND BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

ROBERT MANNING OF BRUNNE

ROBERT MANNING lived, perhaps as a canon, in various houses of the Gilbertine order in Lincolnshire. For a score of years, he tells us, he was in the priory of Brunnewake in Kesteven, six miles from Sempringham, in the extreme south of the county; and here in 1303 he began the *Handling Sin*, a free translation in 12,632 lines of William of Wadington's French *Manuel des Pechiez*. (Wadington is an insignificant place four miles south of Lincoln.) It is, he carefully explains, a manual of sins for unlearned people, treating of the ten commandments, the seven deadly sins, and the like, in purposely simple English, and garnished with sixty-five attractive tales — more than the French version has. Of these the two in the text are fair samples, although the first is not in the French at all, and the second is much shorter there. The rest of our extract is valuable as illustrating the manners of the time; indeed the *Handling Sin* is an entertaining poem, and a worthy forerunner of the *Canterbury Tales* and the *Confessio Amantis*. The other important work of Manning's is his *Chronicle*, finished about 1338 at the priory of Sixtill (or Six Hills), in the middle of Lincolnshire. The first part of this is a translation of Wace's *Brut*, the second of Pierre Langtoft's French Chronicle. Langtoft was born presumably at the hamlet of that name close to Brunne (or Bourne), and was Canon of Bridlington, on the Yorkshire coast. From such indications as these we can infer that there was a good deal of literary activity in the northern countries in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries. It is an odd little circumstance that at another Gilbertine house at which Robert Manning stayed — at Cambridge — he met Robert the Bruce, and was at a feast with Bruce's two brothers, one of whom "made a carved king," says Manning, "and was the best artist of his time."

The first part of the *Chronicle* has been edited by Thomas Hearne, Oxford, 1725, and the second by Furnivall, London, 1889; the *Handling Sin*, by Furnivall for the Early English Text Soc., London, 1901–03. The present text is Furnivall's with a few changes in punctuation and typography; thus the letters ȝ and þ have been replaced by their modern equivalents, u and v distinguished, and the capitalization normalized.

THE GAWAIN POET

THE unknown author[1] of four poems in the British Museum manuscript Cotton Nero A. X + 4 is one of the most distinguished literary figures of the Middle Ages in England. The poems are *The Pearl*, *Cleanness* (or *Purity*), *Patience*, and *Gawain and the Green Knight* — all edited by R. Morris for the E. E. T. S., the first three in *Early English Alliterative Poems*, the last in *Sir Gawayne and the Green Knight* (revised by Gollancz, 1912); later editions of *The Pearl* by C. G. Osgood in the Belles Lettres Series, 1906, and by I. Gollancz, London, 1907; and of *Patience* by H. Bateson, Manchester, 1912. *The Pearl* is a highly finished elegy in an elaborate stanza; *Gawain* is a stirring Arthurian romance, informed with a beautiful spirit of honor and purity. Of these two we give complete translations, with a sample of the original text. *Patience* and *Cleanness*, of 500 and 1800 lines respectively, are written in the most powerful and highly colored alliterative verse, the former telling the story of Jonah, the latter Belshazzar's impious feast and fate.

[1] It ought to be noted that the identification of the author of *Gawain and the Green Knight* with that of *The Pearl*, etc., is based on internal evidence and is not universally accepted.

These four, with *Winner and Waster* and *The Parliament of the Three Ages* (edited together by Gollancz for the Roxburghe Club, 1897) and the Thornton *Morte Arthure* (edited by Perry and Brock for the E. E. T. S., and by M. M. Banks, London, 1900; translation by A. Boyle in Everyman's Library), are the artistic culmination of the great alliterative revival of the fourteenth century. Of our author we know only what can be deduced from his works — that he was a native of Lancashire or thereabouts, since he uses the North-West-Midland dialect; a person of chivalrous as well as religious feeling; highly educated, and conversant with the best society of his time. Guesses about his personality may be found in Gollancz and Bateson. His work appears to fall within the third quarter of the fourteenth century.

The exact signification of *The Pearl* has of late been much discussed. The opinion that it is mainly a religious allegory written to support certain theological opinions, though cast with consummate skill into the form of an elegy, has made much headway since it was proposed by W. H. Schofield in the *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America*, vol. XIX (1904), p. 154; yet many scholars still prefer to consider that it is a genuine lament for a little child, and that the theological matter is secondary. Although a vision setting was one of the commonest devices of mediæval poetry, as one may see in the *Romance of the Rose*, Dante, and Chaucer, the only piece known that bears any striking resemblance to *The Pearl* is Boccaccio's fourteenth eclogue, probably composed in 1360: their relationship is discussed in Schofield's article, p. 204, and in Osgood's introduction. *The Pearl* has been translated by Gollancz (1891), by S. Weir Mitchell (N. Y., 1906 — incomplete), by G. C. Coulton (1906), by C. G. Osgood (1907), by Sophie Jewett (N. Y., 1908), and by Miss Jessie Weston (in *Romance, Vision, and Satire*, Boston, 1912).

Gawain and the Green Knight represents and crowns a great number of Gawain romances, most of which were collected by Sir Frederick Madden in his *Sir Gawayne*, edited for the Bannatyne Club in 1839. Gawain was originally the hero *par excellence* of the Round Table, a knight peerless for utter courage and courtesy. Other heroes in time and in turn became more popular than he, and in some of the French prose romances of the thirteenth century his character was defaced that others might appear to excel him; and Malory and Tennyson have unfortunately perpetuated the debased portrait. The immediate source of our poem was probably a lost French romance. The only editions are Madden's, which is rare, and Morris's, but a new one is preparing. Translations have been published by Miss Weston in *Arthurian Romances Unrepresented in Malory's Morte d' Arthur*, No. 1, London, 1898, in prose, and in *Romance, Vision, and Satire* in verse; by E. J. B. Kirtlan, London (1912), and by C. M. Lewis, New Haven, Conn., 1913 — the last a free retelling. Recent articles are those of Knott in *Modern Language Notes*, XXX (1915), p. 102, and Hulbert in *Modern Philology*, XIII (1915), p. 433. An important *Study of Gawain and the Green Knight* by Professor Kittredge has just been published, Cambridge, Mass., 1916.

The translations of *The Pearl* and *Gawain and the Green Knight* here offered were made in full knowledge of the difficulty, well-nigh futility, of the task, and aim simply at sticking close to the text and shirking none of the hard places.

WILLIAM LANGLAND

Upon the dubious evidence of notes in certain of the manuscripts the author of *Piers Plowman* is generally considered to be one William Langland, of Cleobury Mortimer in Shropshire; and by the equally unsafe method of identifying the Long Will of the poem with the author a sort of biography has been made out for him. But as a matter of fact the authorship is uncertain.

The poem itself was extremely popular, so that numerous manuscripts of it still exist. These fall into three groups, making three versions: the A text is a succinct vision concerning Piers the Plowman in eight *passus*, followed by four *passus* of the vision of Do Wel, Do Bet, and Do Best. This is usually termed the earliest version, written perhaps in

1362. Two revisions and enlargements are called the B and C texts, and dated 1377 and 1399 respectively. These have generally been deemed the work of the first author; but within the last decade the opinion has spread that they are the work of different hands.

The poem is one of the most significant of the age, picturing as it does with graphic simplicity the social and political life of the times from the standpoint of the masses. It is an indispensable counterpart to the more artistic and more fashionable works of Chaucer. In form *Piers Plowman* is an allegorical vision, written in the old-fashioned alliterative metre which was undergoing so remarkable a revival in this century.

The standard edition is W. W. Skeat's in two volumes, London, 1886, containing all three versions with a complete apparatus. Professor Manly states his new theory in the *Cambridge History of English Literature*, II, 1; and both sides of the case are presented in the E. E. T. S. publication, *The Piers Plowman Controversy*, being Original Series, Extra Issue 139 b, c, d, e, London, 1910 (published 1912).

The present modernization follows line by line what seems to have been the original form of the A version, as given by Skeat; the attempt being made to preserve as much of the alliteration as possible, but yet render the language intelligible to the general reader.

JOHN GOWER

JOHN GOWER, who for centuries ranked as the peer of Chaucer, died an old man in 1408; and his splendid tomb may still be seen in St. Saviour's Church, Southwark. He was a well-to-do member of an extensive Kentish family, and possibly a merchant. Practically nothing is known of his life, but we possess his long and interesting will. His chief works were the *Speculum Meditantis* or *Mirour de l'Omme* (before 1380), a French poem of some 30,000 lines, treating of the sins, passing in review the various classes of the world, and giving the scheme of salvation; the *Vox Clamantis* (1382), some 10,000 lines in Latin, sombre, grandiose, largely allegorical, depicting the degeneracy of the times as indicated by the great Peasants' Revolt of 1381; and finally the *Confessio Amantis* (1390) in English, about 33,000 lines in eight books. In this an elderly lover, dissatisfied with his rewards, is made to confess to Genius, Venus' priest, who elucidates for him the points of shrift by over a hundred stories, — with manifold digressions and inconsistencies, — and finally counsels the lover to renounce love and pursue morality. The style of these stories is smooth and lucid, the narrative admirably direct.

Gower is one of the pillars of English literature: he writes in the same pure and elegant language as Chaucer, and though much more conservative — more "mediæval" — than Chaucer, lacking indeed his genius and humor, he represents worthily the tendencies of his time.

The standard edition is that of G. C. Macaulay, 4 vols., Oxford, 1901, from which our extracts are taken. The capitalization has been modernized.

GEOFFREY CHAUCER

GEOFFREY CHAUCER was born in London presumably about 1340, the son of a highly reputable wine-merchant. From the royal records and household accounts we obtain an unusually accurate knowledge of his external life. We first discover him at seventeen, a page in the house of the Countess of Ulster, wife of Prince Lionel, third son of Edward III; and a few years later a valet and finally a squire of the King, serving to some extent John of Gaunt also, Edward's fourth son. When about twenty-six he married Philippa, a lady of the court, probably sister of John of Gaunt's third wife, Katherine Swynford. From his royal masters and friends Chaucer and his wife received for their services pensions ranging from forty to sixty pounds yearly, which might represent $3800 or $5200 of our money; and similar grants were continued to the poet after Philippa's death by Edward III's successors, Richard II and Henry IV. Chaucer held two

custom-house appointments, one for twelve, and one for four years, for which he received the customary fees, whatever they were. At least seven times he was sent abroad — to Flanders, France, and Italy — on the King's business, diplomatic and commercial; and we have records of payments to him on these occasions. He was clerk of the king's works at various places for two years at a good salary, a member of Parliament for Kent for one year, one of a commission to repair the bank of the Thames, a royal forester, and so on; and besides these sources of income he had his share of the perquisites of office and lucrative royal favors. In his prime, then, our great poet was a well-to-do man of affairs. In 1386 he met with reverses, and towards the end of his life he appears actually to have been in straits for want of money; however, when he died in 1400 he was again prosperous.

Chaucer's principal works are: a translation of the French *Romance of the Rose*, an early work, of which, at most, only a fragment is extant; *The House of Fame* (1379?), an aerial journey related in a whimsical and assured style, but left unfinished; *The Parliament of Fowls* (1382), a lively allegory; a prose translation of Boethius' *Consolation of Philosophy* (1383); *Troilus and Criseyda* (1384), a long and perfectly wrought version of Boccaccio's *Filostrato;* the *Legend of Good Women* (1385), also unfinished, with a pretty, spirited prologue and nine hurried lives or *legends* of amorous "martyrs"; and the *Canterbury Tales* (1386–94). Chaucer began like a good craftsman by translating from the French masters of his own century; then he came under the influence of the still greater Italians; and finally in the *Canterbury Tales* — from whatever source he appropriated his plots — he developed into our raciest, most thoroughly English-flavored, poet. These so-called "periods," however, are not mutually exclusive. The great position which Chaucer at once won and has ever since held served as much as the influence of London and the court to make his deft and melodious language the standard of literary English.

The principal modern editions of Chaucer are Skeat's, in six volumes, with complete apparatus, Oxford, 1899; Skeat's *Students' Chaucer*, and the *Globe Chaucer* by Pollard and others. Pollard's *Chaucer Primer* is a helpful companion. The Chaucer Society (now, alas, extinct) has printed much valuable material. Miss E. P. Hammond's *Chaucer, a Bibliographical Manual*, gives all the works upon Chaucer down to 1908. Our text is Skeat's in the *Students' Chaucer*, with half a dozen conservative changes.

Important critical works are *Studies in Chaucer*, by T. R. Lounsbury, 3 vols., New York, 1892; *The Poetry of Chaucer*, by R. K. Root, Boston, 1906; *Geoffrey Chaucer* by Emile Legouis, London and N. Y., 1913; and *Chaucer and his Poetry*, by G. L. Kittredge, Cambridge, Mass., 1915.

THE CANTERBURY TALES

The Canterbury Tales is far from being a completed work. The twenty-nine pilgrims were each to tell two (or four — see ll. 792–794 of the *Prologue*) stories; but we have only twenty finished, and four unfinished. Thus many gaps are left in our MSS., and editors designate the detached groups as A, B, C, etc. The *Knight's Tale* (2250 lines) is an adaptation of Boccaccio's *Teseide* (9054 lines). Less than a third of Chaucer's poem is actual translation, the rest being his own variations. The theme was one in which Chaucer had long been interested, and traces of Boccaccio's poem crop up in *Anelida and Arcite*, *The Parliament of Fowls*, *Troilus*, and *The Legend of Good Women*. The *Prioress's Tale* Chaucer has taken from some Latin prose version current in England of this favorite legend. Strangely enough, the precise sort of Jew-baiting here pictured still persists in Russia and elsewhere, and not infrequently appears in the press. *Sir Thopas* is a merry burlesque of the most popular romances, like *Guy of Warwick*, *Amis and Amiloun*, *Launfal*, *Libeaus Disconus*, and *Sir Tristram*. The Nun's Priest's *Tale of the Cock and the Fox* is a story from the almost universal *Reynard the Fox* cycle, on which point one might consult Miss Petersen's "*On the Sources of the Nonne Prestes Tale*," Boston, 1898. The Pardoner's Tale is a sort of sermon, or *exemplum*, on the text, *Radix malorum est cupiditas*, and the edifying plot is one much employed both in the East and the West. Compare, for example, Kipling's *King's Ankus*, and the *Decameron*, Day 6, Novel 10. The Wife of Bath's

story belongs to a well-known type, a version of it being found, for instance, in *Bishop Percy's Folio MS.*, vol. I., as *The Marriage of Sir Gawaine*, and in Sir Frederick Madden's *Sir Gawayne* as the *Weddynge of Syr Gawen and Dame Ragnel*. For the oldest types of it see G. H. Maynadier's *Wife of Bath's Tale*, London, 1901.

THE ROMANCE OF THE ROSE

THE thirteenth century French *Roman de la Rose*, by Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun, was one of the most influential of European poems. Chaucer shows extreme familiarity with it, and tells us (*Legend of Good Women*, A Prologue, 255) that he translated it. The extant English version, of 7696 lines as contrasted with the 22,000 of the original, passed without question as his until 1870. Since then the authorship has been much debated; and at present most are inclined to call lines 1–1705 Chaucer's, lines 1706–5810 not Chaucer's, the rest possibly his; but the matter is not entirely settled. For a summary of the discussion see Miss Hammond's *Chaucer*, p. 451. The French poem has been edited by Meon, Paris, 1814, and by others. From the end of our excerpt the story goes on to tell how the youth entered the garden and fell in love with a fair bud in the rosary; how with the help of Good Reception and Venus he kissed it; then how Jealousy, Scandal and others drove him off; and how after a long strife, which Jean de Meun sows with interesting digressions, the lover finally won his rose.

THE PARLIAMENT OF FOWLS

The Parliament of Fowls celebrates the wooing by Richard II of the Lady Anne of Bohemia, whom he married at Westminster in January, 1382. Richard is the formel eagle, the other eagles his unsuccessful rivals. The vision setting is noteworthy as having been employed by Chaucer in several of his poems, probably under the influence of the *Romance of the Rose* and of the more recent French verse. On the interpretation of the historical allegory see Emerson, *Modern Philology*, VIII (1910), p. 45, and Moore, *Modern Language Notes* for Jan. 1911.

TROILUS AND CRISEYDE

THE real creator of the Troilus and Criseyde story is Benoit de Sainte-Maure, who made it a conspicuous episode in his *Estorie (or Roman) de Troie*, an elaborate and entertainingly mediæval account of the fall of Troy in over 30,000 lines, written in the north-west of France about 1160 (ed. L. Constans for the Société des Anciens Textes Français, 1904 f.). Benoit elaborated the brief accounts of the Trojan War found in the late Latin writers Dares and Dictys; and his own work was latinized in about 1287 by Guido da Colonna (or delle Colonne) of Messina as the *Historia Trojana*. This again was the source of Boccaccio's *Filostrato*, Chaucer's immediate model. Chaucer, however, takes only about half of the Italian, adds twice that amount of his own, and recurs occasionally to Boccaccio's predecessors. A minute comparison of the two works has been made by W. M. Rossetti in the publications of the Chaucer Society for 1875. Valuable recent articles are those by R. K. Root, in *The Poetry of Chaucer*, Boston, 1906, chap. 6; K. Young, *Origin and Development of the Story of T. & C.*, Chaucer Soc., 1908; Tatlock, *Development and Chronology of Chaucer's Works*, Chaucer Soc., 1907, p. l. f.; Kittredge, *The Development of Chaucer's Troilus, etc.*, Chaucer Soc., 1909.

THE LEGEND OF GOOD WOMEN

The Legend of Good Women was planned to celebrate the constancy in love of twenty famous ladies; but Chaucer wearied of the undertaking and gave it up after nine of their

legends were finished. His models may have been the *Heroides* of Ovid, the *De Claris Mulieribus* of Boccaccio, and similar collections. It is an interesting circumstance that the Prologue, quite the most charming part of the poem, exists in two versions, of which the shorter or A version appears to be the later — though the matter is still in dispute. And this prologue, especially near the beginning, is in diction so amazingly like the works of the contemporary French poets Machault, Froissart, and Deschamps, that it has been surmised that Chaucer wrote it largely as a compliment to them and sent it to Deschamps in acknowledgment of certain flattering stanzas addressed by Deschamps to him. Important articles on *The Legend* are those of J. L. Lowes in the *Publication of the Modern Language Association of America*, XIX, 593, and XX, 749, and J. C. French's *The Problem of the Two Prologues*, etc., Baltimore, 1905.

THOMAS HOCCLEVE

THE ingenuous Thomas Hoccleve (or Occleve) was born about 1367, and died about 1450, so that he was precisely a contemporary of Lydgate. Like Lydgate he was a disciple and a profound admirer of Chaucer, perhaps indeed, as he claims, a friend. He was a Londoner, living till his old age at Chester's Inn (where Somerset House now stands), and daily going by the Strand or the river to his work in the Privy Seal office at Westminster. From official records and his own garrulous poems, we know a good deal about his life. In early manhood he lived gayly and extravagantly — at least so he says; when middle-aged and poor he married — for love; and when old he was cared for in Southwick Priory Hampshire. His chief works are the *Letters of Cupid* (475 ll.), translated from Christine de Pisan in 1402; *La Male Regle* (448 ll.), 1406, autobiographical; *The Regement of Princes* (5463 ll.), 1412, a book of advice for Prince Hal, from the *De Regimine Principum* of Aegidius Romanus, and other sources; the *Complaint* (413 ll.) and the *Dialogue* (826 ll.), both about 1421, autobiographical poems. He wrote very pleasing short pieces — balades, roundels, etc. — and versified two stories from the *Gesta Romanorum*. Hoccleve's work is interesting for the naïve autobiographical details, the satire on follies of the day — like long sleeves — and the sincere tributes to Chaucer and Gower.

The verse is as a rule mechanical, unmusical, yet in certain of the short poems it shows spirit, and something like virtuosity. The extracts are from F. J. Furnivall's Edition of Hoccleve in 3 volumes for the E. E. T. S., with the capitalization somewhat modernized and *u* and *v* distinguished.

JOHN LYDGATE

JOHN LYDGATE lived from about 1370 to about 1450, a large part of this time as a monk of Bury St. Edmunds. For a while he was a priest of Hatfield Regis. Little else is known of his life, but judging from his many occasional poems, he dwelt much in the world and was a favorite of princes and nobles. His principal works are: *The Temple of Glass* (1403 ll., in 7-line stanzas), *Reason and Sensuality* (7040 ll., in short couplets, unfinished, rich in mediæval description, where Pallas and Venus strive for the author's allegiance), *The Troy Book* (30,117 ll. in heroic couplets), *The Pilgrimage of the Life of Man* (24,832 ll. in short couplets), *The Fall of Princes* (36,316 ll. in 7- and 8-line stanzas), and the *Secreta Secretorum*, or *Secrees of Olde Philosoffres* (1491 ll. in rhyme royal). Besides this bulk of somewhat heavy poems, Lydgate produced a great amount of minor verse in various keys, such as fables, saints' lives, religious lyrics, mummings and satires, and in these much of his best is found. Lydgate's reputation in his lifetime was very great; he was constantly named with Chaucer and Gower, and early MSS. and reprints of his works abound. Of late he has been unduly depreciated, partly from lack of material to judge him by, partly from the corrupt state of the text. Now his works are gradually being made accessible. The best account of his life is in Schick's edition of *The Temple*

of Glass, E. E. T. S., London, 1891. H. N. MacCracken in *The Minor Poems of John Lydgate*, vol. I, E. E. T. S., 1911, is authoritative on the Lydgate canon. Lydgate's style is smooth, dignified, long-winded; yet at times he attains liveliness and even grace. His diction is incredibly tinctured by that of his revered master, Chaucer. Both in matter and manner he is thoroughly representative of the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries; he is a storehouse of mediæval commonplace.

JOHN SKELTON

The extraordinarily conceited, whimsical, and pugnacious John Skelton was probably born at Diss in Norfolk about 1460. He was educated at Cambridge, and received the degree in rhetoric of *Poeta Laureatus* — of which he was extremely vain — not only from Cambridge, but from Oxford and Louvain as well. His great learning is attested by Caxton in the preface to his *Æneid*, by Erasmus, and by the fact that (about 1498) he was made tutor to the prince who (in 1509) became Henry VIII: it is likewise sufficiently patent in his works. From them it is plain that he was much at court, or at least about London. His patrons included Wolsey; but his attitude toward Henry's powerful minister gradually changed until in *Speak Parrot* and *Why Come Ye Not To Court* he virulently attacked the Cardinal. The result was that toward the end of his life the poet was obliged to take sanctuary at Westminster Abbey and stay there till his death in 1529. He had been rector of Diss and presumably resident there since 1503. Such was the mischievous and sportive nature of this misplaced parson that for long after his death he remained a stock figure in "merry tales" and plays. His chief works are: *The Bowge of Court* (before 1508), a vivid allegory of the corruption of courts (bouge = free board); *Philip Sparrow* (before 1508); *The Tunning of Elinour Rumming* (c. 1510); *Magnificence* (c. 1516), an elaborate morality play; *Colin Clout* (1519), a satire directed against the clergy; *A Goodly Garland of Laurel* (c. 1520), a long vision-allegory of self-laudation; and *Why Come Ye Not To Court?* (1522), a violent satire on Wolsey. Many of his works are lost. Skelton is among the most important and original of English satirists: though still under Chaucer's influence (especially in *The Garland of Laurel*), he is one of the beginners of our modern poetry.

The standard edition of his works is by Alexander Dyce, two vols., London, 1843. The present text is from the American edition of Dyce, Boston, 1866, with the spelling modernized — that being an attention which in the editors' opinion Skelton's poems particularly deserve: only an occasional (sounded) -es or -e is retained, and old spellings that indicate a different pronunciation from the present. Recent articles on Skelton are A. Kolbing's *Zur Characteristic Skeltons*, and Friedrich Brie's *Skelton Studien*, in *Englische Studien*, XXXVII, 1.

STEPHEN HAWES

Stephen Hawes (c. 1474–c. 1529) was a groom of the chamber to Henry VII, and a court poet. He was born in Suffolk, educated at Oxford; was travelled, accomplished, and knew most of Lydgate by heart. By all odds his most important work is *The Pastime of Pleasure*, or *The History of Graunde Amoure and La Bel Pucel, containing the Knowledge of the Seven Sciences and the Course of Man's Life in this World*, written in 1506. For descriptions of his other poems, see the *Cambridge History of English Literature*, p. 226. The copious extracts of *The Pastime* given in our text are from T. Wright's edition for the Percy Society, London, 1845. In this gentle allegory the hero, Grand Amour, sets out in search of La Bel Pucel. In the tower of Doctrine he is instructed in Grammar, Logic, and Rhetoric — the *trivium;* and in Arithmetic, Music, Geometry, and Astronomy — the *quadrivium*. He finds La Bel Pucel and is accepted by her, but cannot marry until he undergoes successfully prodigious adventures with a three-headed giant, a seven-headed

giant, and other monsters. He overcomes all these obstacles and marries the damsel. At last age comes upon him, with Policy and Avarice; then Death with Contrition and Conscience; Remembrance writes his Epitaph, and Fame enrolls him among the great knights. The Pastime of Pleasure is a notable link between the old metrical romances and the old didactic allegories, on the one hand, and *The Faerie Queene*, on the other.

POPULAR BALLADS

A POPULAR or traditional ballad is a song that tells a story and that has been handed down among the folk for generations. Even when an individual author is presumed to have given the story its first form, his personal characteristics were obliterated in the long process of transmission, during which each singer modified the text at his will, until the product is truly that of the people. A text becomes fixed only when it is caught by print, and the life of the ballad, properly speaking, ends. The oldest so caught is *Judas*, found in a manuscript of the thirteenth century; and one of the most recent is the *Bitter Withy*, discovered in 1868. We have a few ballads written down in the fifteenth century; but the bulk of those extant probably date in their present form from the seventeenth century; Bishop Percy's old manuscript, for example, was written about 1650. In spite of the praise of ballads by Sir Philip Sidney, Ben Jonson, and Addison, they were neglected by the literary world until well into the eighteenth century. An interest in them was one of the signs of the romantic movement, and the publication of Percy's *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* in 1765, which consists largely of old ballads, marks an epoch in English literature. The enthusiastic collecting period was from about 1750 to 1850, Percy and Sir Walter Scott being the most notable of the collectors.

Ballads are the simplest of poetry, the usual metre being a stanza of four roughly iambic lines, the unrhymed first and third of four beats, the rhyming second and fourth of three beats. It is common to have all four lines with four beats, or to have rhyming couplets; very few ballads have any greater metrical sophistication. The refrain is much employed; so is assonance and imperfect rhyme. There is much repetition of phrase and of situation; many of the epithets are conventional; the favorite numbers, three, seven, and nine are conspicuous; gold and silver and gems abound; supernatural phenomena are unhesitatingly accepted; the fairy world is very near, and beasts are not so different from men. Thus many archaic literary traits are preserved in the ballads, along with the emotions and the culture of a long past age.

The standard collection of English ballads is that by the late F. J. Child in ten parts or five volumes — *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, Boston, 1882–98. All these ballads (but not all the versions of them) have been reprinted in one convenient volume with the same title by Helen Child Sargent and G. L. Kittredge, Boston, 1904. The text of our selections is that of Child. The best critical account is that of F. B. Gummere, *The Popular Ballad*, Boston, 1907.

JOHN BARBOUR

FOR the life of John Barbour, the first of the important Scottish poets, we have the same sort of information as about his English contemporary Chaucer. From state papers we glean that he was born at about 1320, and that he died in 1395; that he was archdeacon of Aberdeen; that he frequently had safe-conduct to travel and study in England and France — as in 1357, for example, when Edward III permits him to conduct three scholars to Oxford; that in 1373 he was clerk of the audit and one of the auditors of the exchequer to Robert II of Scotland; and that he received various pensions and perquisites from his royal master.

As *The Bruce* was composed within fifty years of its hero's death, it is by no means devoid of historic authenticity, but in form it is a spirited romance, full of mediæval and

patriotic exaggeration, abounding in stirring narrative, and in sage reflections. The 13,615 octosyllabic lines are divided into fourteen cantos. The language is practically that of the north of England in the fourteenth century, and it is sometimes called "Early Scots" to distinguish it from the more sophisticated and more difficult "Middle Scots" of the writers after 1450. The best edition is that of W. W. Skeat for the E. E. T. S., 1870–89, and for the Scottish Text Society, 1893–95, from which latter our excerpts are taken.

In addition to *The Bruce*, Barbour has had attributed to him on insufficient evidence the fragmentary *Troy Book* in the northern dialect, a northern collection of *Legends of the Saints*, and, with perhaps better reason, the *Buik of Alexander*. Still further additions to his canon are proposed by G. Neilson in his *John Barbour*, London, 1900 (cf. *Athenæum*, 27 Feb., 1897, and *Scottish Antiquary*, Jan., 1897). See also J. T. T. Brown, *The Wallace and the Bruce Re-studied*, Bonn, 1900; and W. A. Craigie, "John Barbour and Blind Harry as Literature," *Scottish Review*, XXII, 173.

"BLIND HARRY"

The authority usually cited for the date and the author of *The Wallace* is John Major (1470–1550), the Scottish historian, who says that such a work was composed in Major's infancy by a wandering minstrel, Henry, who was blind from his birth. There happen also to be entries of payments to a "Blin Harry" up to 1492 in the accounts of James IV. The poem, however, seems so much like the work of a well-read accomplished person, observant of nature and of affairs, that it is on the whole safer to consider the authorship doubtful. The unique MS., in the Advocates' Library in Edinburgh, is anonymous, as are also the early printed editions of 1508, 1570, 1594, 1601, 1611, etc.

The 11,858 lines, in eleven books, are a largely apocryphal biography of the great Scottish hero who figured so prominently in history from 1296 to 1298, and was brutally executed in 1305, but the rest of whose career is almost totally unknown. The work is written in the comparatively new "heroic" couplet introduced by Chaucer, and for the most part in a straightforward, energetic, unvaried style; but not infrequently the author shows that he can use the artificial, "aureate" terms of Middle Scots. The poem has had an immense popularity in Scotland, and in the modern Scots version of William Hamilton (1722) had some influence on Burns.

Our excerpts are from the edition of J. Moir for the Scottish Text Society, 1884–89. For the authorship see J. T. T. Brown's *The Wallace and the Bruce Re-studied*, Bonn, 1900, and for the best discussion of the legendary and historical constituents of the poem, with their bearing on authorship, the MS. dissertation of F. L. Childs, *Studies in The Wallace*, in Harvard University Library.

JAMES I OF SCOTS

King James I of Scotland, the author of the *King's Quair*, was captured at sea by the English in 1406 — when he was about eleven — and kept prisoner until 1424. In that year he married an English lady, Joan Beaufort, daughter of the Earl of Somerset, was ransomed, and went home to reign. After an energetic rule of thirteen years, during which he sought especially to crush the power of the turbulent nobles, he was savagely murdered at Perth by the outlawed Sir Robert Graham and a band of Highlanders.

The poem is an allegorical account of James's love affair. The metre is the seven-line stanza of Chaucer's *Troilus*, which, from James's use of it, is often called "rime royal." In form it is a love-vision of the type best known by the *Romance of the Rose*, and it abounds in reflections of Chaucer's works, though Lydgate's *Temple of Glass* is the chief source. In fact, it is one of the most characteristic pieces of the Chaucerian school. The language is a somewhat artificial one, partly northern or Scots, and partly that of Chaucer — Midland English. The date is between 1423 and his death in 1437.

The standard edition is that of W. W. Skeat for the Scottish Text Soc., new ed., 1911, from which our text is taken. The question of the authorship is debated in J. T. T. Brown's *The Authorship of the King's Quair*, Glasgow, 1896; Jusserand's *Jaques 1re d'Ecosse fut-il poète*, Paris, 1897; R. S. Rait's *The King's Quair and the new Criticism*, 1898; A. Lawson's *Kinge's Quair and the Quare of Jelusy*, Edinburgh, 1910. For sources, see W. A. Neilson's *Origins and Sources of the Court of Love*, Boston, 1899, pp. 152, 232 *f.*

ROBERT HENRYSON

ALMOST nothing is known of Henryson, one of the greatest of the Scottish Chaucerians. He lived perhaps from 1425 to 1500. He may be the master Robert Henryson, already "licentiate in arts and bachelor in degrees," incorporated a member of Glasgow University in 1462; and he is called "schoolmaster of Dumfermlin" in the earliest edition of his *Fables* (1560).

His *Testament of Cresseid*, written mostly in Chaucer's seven-line stanza, is, although a bit laden with mediæval machinery at the start, one of the most powerful and affecting poems of the century, as his *Robyn and Makyn* is one of the most graceful and pleasing of pastorals. The thirteen *Fables* are perhaps an even more significant accomplishment, for to this time-honored theme Henryson has brought so much vivacity and acute, sympathetic observation of men and beasts, that no fables have more flavor than his. Besides these Henryson wrote a dozen or more short poems. His works have been edited by D. Laing, Edinburgh, 1865; and by G. G. Smith for the Scottish Text Soc., 3 vols., Edinburgh, 1906–8. Our selections are from the latter, in the *Testament* and the fable of *The Two Mice* following the Charteris text, in *The Fox, the Wolf, and the Cadger* that of the Harleian MS.

WILLIAM DUNBAR

DUNBAR lived from about 1460 to 1520. He graduated bachelor of arts at St. Andrews in 1477, and master in 1479. He was probably of noble kin, but relatively humble station; and it is possible that he was for a time a wandering friar, though the biographical details that have been drawn from his poem on "How Dunbar was desyrd to be ane Freir" should be accepted cautiously on account of the obviously farcical nature of the poem. Later he was a priest at court, accompanied certain expeditions on the king's business, and received certain pensions and grants of livery. A poet's position in the beginning of the sixteenth century is still like Chaucer's.

Dunbar's two most important allegorical poems are those given in our text — *The Thistle and the Rose*, a parliament of beasts and birds in imitation of Chaucer's *Parliament of Fowls*, written in honor of the betrothal of James IV of Scotland and Margaret Tudor, daughter of Henry VII of England; and *The Golden Targe*, wherein the poet represents himself as trying in vain to ward off the arrows of love by the shield of reason. These elegant stanzas are written in the Middle Scots "aureate" style, and in conscious emulation of Chaucer, Gower, and Lydgate, characteristic praise of whom is to be found at the end of *The Golden Targe*. There is the same polish in several of the occasional pieces here given; but it is in the *Seven Deadly Sins*, the *Dregy*, and *Kind Kittok* that those qualities for which Dunbar is most famous appear — audacious fancy and rollicking humor, an astonishing virtuosity in every metre, and a cataclysmic wealth of strange words.

Dunbar wrote in all about a hundred poems. The most useful editions are those of J. Schipper, Vienna, 1894, and of John Small and others in the Scottish Text Soc., 1884–93. Our texts are from the latter. Schipper has also written a biographical and critical study, *William Dunbar, sein Leben und seine Gedichte*, Berlin, 1884.

GAVIN DOUGLAS

Gavin Douglas (c. 1475–1522) was third son of the great Earl of Angus, Archibald Bell-the-Cat. He was educated at St. Andrews, entered the church, and after many vicissitudes — for he was deep in the politics of a most turbulent period — became bishop of Dunkeld. All his literary work appears to have been done while he was Dean of St. Giles in Edinburgh, from 1501 to 1513. His *Æneid* (1513), "the first version of a great poet in any English dialect," is a translation of Virgil's twelve books, and the thirteenth of Mapheus Vegius, in vigorous Middle Scots. Peculiarly interesting are the original prologues to all the books, on the seasons or other subjects not at all connected with the poems. That to the twelfth book is perhaps the most overwhelming example of the "fresch anamalit termes celicall," the "sugurit," "aureate," "mellifluate," coinages of these late Scottish mediævalists, who at the same time begin to show the influence of the Revival of Learning. *King Hart* is of course the human heart in the castle of the body, surrounded by his servitors, the five senses: it is a fairly well constructed allegory of over 900 lines. *The Palace of Honour*, Douglas's earliest work (1501), comprises 2166 lines in nine-line stanzas. It is an over-elaborate dream-vision, stuffed with all manner of mediæval motives, where the poet finds Venus and Prince Honour in a mansion somewhat like that in Chaucer's *House of Fame*.

The only collected edition of Douglas's works is that by John Small, 4 vols., Edinburgh, 1874, from which our text is taken.

SIR DAVID LYNDESAY

Sir David Lyndesay lived approximately from 1490 to 1555. He may have attended St. Andrews University; thereafter, for most of his life, he was a personal attendant, in various offices, upon James V of Scotland, finally in 1529 attaining knighthood and the office of chief herald, or Lyon King of Arms. He was sent on several missions abroad, sat for a while as member of Parliament, and was a general master of ceremonies at the Scottish court.

In *The Dream* (1134 lines) Lyndesay is seeking to edify his young prince by an allegorical vision somewhat in Chaucer's style, wherein after a visit to Hell, Purgatory, and the various spheres, his guide, Dame Remembrance, displays to him the native resources of his own Scotland; and when the author asks, "Why, then, is it so poor?" she replies, "Because of misgovernment"; and anon follows the excerpt given in our text, where John the Common Wealth lays bare in trenchant fashion the evils under which Scotland suffered. The date of composition may be 1528.

The Testament and Complaint of our Sovreign Lord's Papyngo (1190 lines) is one of Lyndesay's most polished satires. The papyngo or parrot is blown from the top of a high tree which she ought never to have climbed, and fatally hurt. She laments her ambition, and sends one warning epistle to the king, and another to her brethren of the court, which latter ends with the first three stanzas of our extract.

Kitty's Confession is one of Lyndsay's best short satires, — reasonable, pungent, and exposing an obvious specific abuse.

Squire Meldrum (1847 lines) is a little romance, which recalls in a way the old mediæval romances, but which is brought quite up to date — being founded indeed upon contemporary happenings. The Fifeshire hero-squire defeats the English champion in France, wins a sea-fight, also a lovely lady, takes a great castle, is at last dreadfully wounded and left for dead by brutal assailants, but recovers to live to a good old age and make the *Testament* which is given in our extract.

The chief works of Lyndesay's not represented here are *The Dialogue betwixt Experience and a Courtier* (6333 lines), called also *The Monarchy*, an account of certain biblical stories and church doctrines, and *A Pleasant Satire of The Three Estates* (4652 lines), a

unique sort of morality play of great length and scope, a keen and amusing satire directed against the weaknesses of the nobles, the burgesses, and the clerics — indeed one of the most remarkable and entertaining works of the time, and the most vivacious and realistic of moralities.

Lyndesay is the last of the Scottish Chaucerians: he cites reverently the master's name along with those of Lydgate and Gower, but he is touched by the spirit of the Reformation and the Renaissance, and is as much a reformer as a poet. The principal edition of his works is that by David Laing, 3 vols., Edinburgh, 1879. That by F. Hall and J. A. H. Murray for the E. E. T. S., from which our texts are taken, is unfinished.

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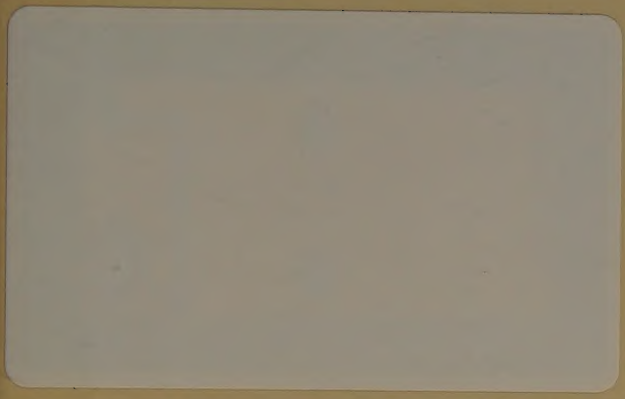

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Neilson, William Allan,
1869-1946.
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